

CONTENTS

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Dedication	...	i—ii
Preface	...	iii—xxiii
Introduction	...	1—28 ✓
<u>Despotism of Sultan Bahlul</u>	...	15—19
Bahlul's attitude towards the nobles	...	19—23
Conflict with the Sharqi Sultans	...	23—28
The Position of the old nobles towards the closing years of Bahlul's reign	...	29—60
<u>Despotism of the Successors of Bahlul Lodi</u>	...	38—55 ✓
Internal conflict within the nobility	...	55—60
<u>Composition of the Nobility</u>	...	61—93
<u>Despotism of Sher Shah and His Successors</u>	...	62—76 ✓
Overcentralization of Powers	...	76—79
Suppression of the Nobility	...	79—87
Reforms and Regulations	...	★ 87—93 ✓
<u>Composition of the Nobility</u>	...	94—109
<u>Sher Shah's Rajput Policy</u>	...	110—135
Army Organization	...	111—117
Khasa Khail	...	117—119
The Sawars and the value of their service	...	119—121
The Elephants	...	121—122
Infantry	...	122—127
Organization	...	127—135
<u>Martial Qualities of the Generals of the</u>	...	136—168°
Afghan period	...	136—140
<u>Agrarian system</u>	...	140—142
<u>Revenue Units</u>	...	
<u>Shiqdar and Shiqdari</u>	...	

II

Duties of the Shiqdars and their Subordinates...	142—146
Nature of Iqta' system ...	146—152
Transfer of the Iqta's ...	152—155
Administration of Khalsa lands ...	155—158
The Administration of Revenue ...	158—168
A Select Bibliography ...	169—176
Index ...	177—185
Errata ...	187—188

INTRODUCTION

With the Turkish conquest of north India towards the close of the 12th century far reaching changes took place in the political and socio-economic institutions of Medieval India. The establishment of the Turkish rule represented the coming of a new military ruling class which was paid in part by special military land-grants called *iqtas*. Thus the Turkish conquerors patterned their state-system on the model of the administrative machinery that had already evolved in Ghazni and other Muslim lands long before the establishment of the Turkish Sultanate in India. The Sultans also introduced important changes in their administrative system from time to time in view of the needs of the country. They retained some indigenous institutions at the local level for their immense utility and value. A brief survey of the evolution of the administrative system of the Delhi Sultanate is of primary importance as it continued with necessary improvements and modifications through out the Muslim period of Indian history.

On the assassination of Sultan Shihabud-din of Ghore in 1206, the control of his Indian territories passed to the hands of Qutb ud-din Aibek, who, henceforth, was an independent ruler as he had severed off his ties with the court of Ghazni. Having assumed the status of an independent Sultan, Qutb ud-din Aibek set to consolidate his authority in north India by following a policy of conciliation and open-handed generosity. After his accidental death in 1210, Sultan Iltutmish not only followed his examples with regard to the stabilization of the Turkish rule in the Sultanate of Delhi, but also took necessary measures to enhance the prestige of the Sultan. He emphasized the dignified part of kingship by organizing his court magnificently, so that its splendour might catch the imagination of people. Since his times the *darbar* of the Sultan was known

for its ostentation and pomp.¹ This was done with a view to raising the Sultan head and shoulders above the nobles of the Sultanate. Later on, Balban, the Khalji and the Tughluq Sultans further centralised the state machinery and made the imperial officers realize that they held their privileged positions at the royal will.

Inspired by the non-Islamic Iranian traditions of distance between royalty and people, the Sultans looked upon any direct contact with the latter as derogatory to the dignity of the king. They also demanded unwavering loyalty and complete subservience from the nobles to the crown. As certain standards with regard to the behaviour of the Sultan were already set outside India, the Sultans of India also conformed to them. They tried to be just, fair, firm and awe-inspiring. While administering justice, all the able Sultans considered it the part of their duty to dispense impartial justice to all irrespective of status, caste or creed.² In fact, this practice made the sultans popular among people and strengthened their rule.

Next to kingship came the nobility, for the entire functioning of the state machinery depended upon the nobles of the Sultans. The *wazirs* (ministers) at the centre, the *muqtas* (governors) of the *wilayets* (provinces) and the army commanders were appointed from amongst the nobles. For this reason, every sultan, who occupied the throne of Delhi had to take different factors into consideration with regard to the organization of his nobility. [He had a band of his trusted followers whom he raised to the key-posts in the administration of his sultanate as their services to his cause were great and to be rewarded. Besides, he also won over new persons who could subserve his interests for their influence with certain sections of people. They were also given important place in the nobility.]

1. Cf. *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the 13th century*, Prof. K. A. Nizami, Aligarh, 1961, pp. 93-94.
2. *Tarikh-i-Fakhr al-Din Mubarak Shah*, Fakhr Muddabir, p. 33. Also *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the 13th century op. cit* pp. 111-112.

The evidence, available in the '*Tarikh-i-Fakhr u'd-din Mubarak Shah*', regarding the reign of Sultan Qutb ud-din Aibek reveals that the nobility of the founder of the Delhi Sultanate was composed of different racial elements. The statement of the contemporary writer indicates that it included the Turks, Ghorids, Khurasanis, Khaljis and the Indians.¹ Amongst them the majority was constituted by the Turks, slaves as well as free-born. The composition of the nobility does not seem to have undergone any change after the death of Sultan Qutb ud-din Aibek (1219).² His successor, Sultan Iltutmish organised his nobility from among the old nobles of the times of Shihab ud-din of Ghore and Qutb ud-din Aibek and raised his early followers along with the foreign immigrants who had fled to India from the Muslim lands conquered by the Mongols³ to counter-balance the powers of the old nobles.

On the death of Iltutmish (April 30, 1236), the Turk nobles who formed the majority in the ruling class, started a mad race for capturing the key-posts in the Sultanate.⁴ They monopolised all the important posts and territories for the Turks of blue blood, while the non-Turks were relegated to the back-ground.⁵ The Turks enjoyed their supremacy till the close of Sultan Nasir u'd-din Mahmud's reign, when Balban, the prime noble of the Sultanate, destroyed most of them by treacherous means.⁵

1. *Fakhr Muddabir, op. cit.*, p. 33.

2. *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the 13th century, op. cit.*, pp. 124-128.

3. *Isami, Futuh u's-Salatin*, pp. 128, 147-148. 448 for the appointment of non-Turk foreigners to the important posts.

Barani, p. 28.

4. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 214.

It is noteworthy that the successors of Iltutmish, being tired of the tutelage of the Turk nobles took the non-Turks into confidence to counter balance the Turk nobles, but in vain. Once Rehman, denounced by Minhaj as an Indian was favoured by Sultan Nasir-u'd-din Mahmud with an important position to help him in reducing the Turks to obedience.

5. *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, Prof K.A. Nizami, (Kitab Mahal, Allahabad), 1966, pp. 48-50.

✓ Balban himself a Turk and great faddist by birth, favoured the non-Turks with important ranks and position in such a manner that there was a rough balance between them and the Turks. But no low-born persons could hold any post of importance in his days. The Afghans who were looked down upon as uncouth and rustic people and were employed as soldiers for their physical virility, were also considered favourably by Balban. They were entrusted with the charge of military posts (*thanass*) around Delhi and in the parganas of Jalali, Kampil, Patiali and Bhojpur to suppress the dacoits and highwaymen. Since this time the Afghans began to rise in status and dignity in the Sultanate of Delhi.¹ ✓

The strength of the Khaljis² whom the Turks considered inferior to them, had considerably increased. The non-Turks nobles also aligned with them against the Turks who wanted to oust them from the nobility and monopolise key-posts and territories for themselves during the reign of weak Kaiqubad. As a result, the Turkish rule was over-thrown and the throne passed to the Khaljis.

The advent of the Khaljis to power was marked by the emergence of the non-Turks, many of whom could not even dream of attaining high positions in the nobility of the Sultanate previously. Unlike their Turk predecessors, the Khalji Sultans gave up to attach any importance to noble birth.³ They threw open the doors of government service to all, irrespective of race, birth and also creed to some extent. The principle of

1. The contemporary evidence, found in the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, shows that the Afghans served in the beginning as *Sawars* and petty army officials. This reference also throws light on their unpolished manners. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 315.

Barani, pp. 57-59, for Balban's favour to the Afghans.

2. The Khaljis were of Turk origin, but they were considered inferior to the Turks of Central Asia for their long stay in the region of Ghazni. Cf. *The Nobility Under the Khalji Sultans*, Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi, *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad, Jan., 1863, Vol. XXXVII, No. 1, pp. 52-53 for the origin of the Khaljis.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-57.

noble-birth was not taken into consideration, but the merit of a candidate was supposed to be the essential qualification for the state service. Thus persons could rise in Status and position according to their abilities.

It is worthy of note that Sultan Jalal u'd-din Khalji, after his accession, conferred the highest-position of *naib malik* (deputy of the King) upon Malik Qutb u'd-din 'Alvi,¹ who did not belong to the tribe of the Sultan. Likewise, Maulana Siraj-ud-din Savi of Samana was favoured with the status of the *nadim-i-khas* (royal associate).² A person of the Mandahar tribe (Hindu) was appointed the royal *vakildar* on a handsome salary of one lac jitals per month for his bravery which he had shown on the battle field against the Sultan when the latter held the *Shiqq* of Samana as its *Muqta*.³ Malik Sa'd U'ddin *Mantaqi*, who lived as a recluse, was raised to the rank of a high noble.⁴ Even the hated Mongols who were regarded not only as thoroughly uncouth and uncivilized but also the great enemies of Islam, were induced after their defeat to accept Islam and enter the royal service as nobles.⁵

With the advent of Ala a'ddin Khalji the nobility became more broad-based as the expansion of the Empire had necessitated the recruitment of large numbers of people for its army and administration. It now included common people as well as men of noble birth. The Sultan, who had benefited from his composite contingent of followers in his campaigns against the Rajas of Bhilsa and Deogiri during his uncle's times, never seems to have distinguished between persons in connection with their appointment to administrative or military posts on the basis of their birth. His early associates, Mahmud Salim, "a low-born wicked person of Samana", and Ikhtiyar u'ddin Hud, the murderers of Sultan Jalal u'ddin Khalji were raised

1. *Barani*, p. 202.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 219.

along with others to dignity and high position in the ruling class.¹ In fact, their political rise can be attributed to the changed socio-political conditions caused by the advent of the Khaljis to supreme power.²

Mention may also be made of the Afghans who were looked down upon as uncivilised people in the days of the early Sultans but were employed in the armies as *sawars* and petty officials for their physical virility, were by this time Indianised and had attained to the positions of high nobles. Ikhtiyar u'ddin Yal Afghan is mentioned among the high nobles of 'Ala'i reign.³ Yal Afghan continued to enjoy a prominent place in the administration till the time of Muhammad bin Tuqluq. His younger brother, Malik Makh Afghan also rose to prominence during the Khalji period.

But it is wrong to assume that only the Indians or common people were taken in the royal service. The foreigners and the descendants of the members of old Turkish aristocracy were also given good posts. The fact that the Khalji Sultans did not seem to have attached importance to noble birth like their Turk predecessors may be highlighted here. This is why the Hindus also appear to have occupied high positions during their times. For instance, Malik Naik, a Hindu general was appointed as the Muqta of the *Shiqq* of Samana and Sunam with a high rank. As he held a higher rank than Malik Ghazi (later Sultan Ghiyas u'ddin Tughluq), the *Muqta* of Dipalpur, the latter had to fight under his command against the Mongol invaders led by Ali Beg and Tartaq.⁴ According to the inscription of

1. Barani, p. 250.

2. *The Nobility under the Khalji Sultans, Islamic Culture, Hyderabad, op. cit., pp. 59-60.*

3. Barani, p. 240.

4. Barani says : 'Ali Beg and Tartaq were the leaders of the Mongolsskirting the mountains, they reached the territory of Amroha with thirty or forty thousand men. Sultan 'Ala u'ddin sent Malik Naik and Akbar Beg with the Muslim army against them.' Barani, pp. 320-21.

Barani does not say any thing about the religion of Malik Naik. Only 'Amir Khusrau informs us that Malik Naik was a Hindu noble. "The soil of the wilderness drank the blood of the armies of 'Ali Beg and Tartaq when the two Turkish Khans were suddenly captured by a Hindu (the servant of the court) and conflagration was quelled by the sharpness of the imperial sword." *Khazai'n al-Futuh*, p. 41.

Ladmao (Jodhpur), dated 1316, Sultan 'Ala u'ddin appointed a Hindu, Sadharna as Dhanadh Karan (treasurer).¹ Similarly, the Hindus were appointed to good posts by the Muslim governors in vilayets and *iqtas*. The documentary evidence, contained in the *Ijaz-i-Khusravi* mentions the name of Dev Chand who served as *diwan* of the *Muqta* of Kara² in 1309. In short, by the beginning of the 14th century the Hindus appear to have been entrusted with important posts in the army and administration of the Delhi Sultanate.

Barani's list of the low-born persons raised by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq reveals the extent to which the character of the nobility had changed. The ambition of the Sultan to bring the whole of the sub-continent of India under his sway by conquest necessitated the employment of a large number of competent people regardless of any considerations, whatsoever. Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq encouraged the foreigners to come in large numbers and settle down in India by showering high favours upon them. He also took low-born people into state service in considerable number and thus met the need arisen out of the territorial expansion of the Sultanate. Amongst the low-born people, many appear to have been Hindus as Barani's list, though incomplete, reveals :

"Najba, the low-born musician was favoured in such a way that he surpassed many nobles in position and rank, for Gujarat, Multan and Badaun were (successively) placed under his charge. Likewise, 'Aziz Khumar (the vintner), his (Aziz's) brother, and Firoz Hajjam (the barber), Mankah Tabbakh (the cook), Mas'ud Khumar (the vintner), Ladah Baghwan (the gardener) and many other gems of indecent birth were raised to high positions and assigned the charge of important offices and extensive territories. He (the Sultan) gave Shaikh Babu, the son of a Nayak weaver, a position near to himself and elevated the rank and position of such a low-born man among mankind. He entrusted the

1. Cf. *Journal of Indian History*, August, 1936, p. 183.

2. *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng. tr. Prof. Hasan Askari, *Medieval India—A Miscellany*, Aligarh, Vol. I, 1969, pp. 16-17.

wizarat (the Ministry of revenue) to Pera Mali (the gardener), the lowest of the low-born and mean-born men of Hind and Sind, and placed him over and above the *maliks*, *walis* and *Muqtas*. He assigned to Kishan Bazran Indri, who was the meanest of the mean-born, the territory of Awadh. To Maqbil, the slave of Ahmad Aiyaz, who in appearance and character was a shame for all slaves, he gave the *wizarat* of Gujarat, which had been a post for great khans and *wazirs*.¹ Battuta also testifies to the fact that Hindus held important positions under Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq. For example, Ratan was appointed as the governor of the extensive vilayet of Sind with the permission of keeping drum and flag which were the privileges to be granted to high grandees of the Empire.² Likewise the fort of Gulharga was assigned to the charge of Dhara Dhar, a Hindu noble.³

With the accession of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq, the policy of Muhammad bin Tughluq with regard to the employment of the foreigners and low-born people was abandoned. In an attempt to win over the nobles of Indian origin, the Sultan turned back the foreigners from the border cities where they had come from different countries, such as Central Asia, Sistan, Eden, Egypt, etc.⁴ Since the Sultanate had considerably shrunk in area owing to the establishment of provincial kingdoms of Bengal and the Deccan, the Sultan could afford to deny the foreigners state service. Furthermore, power tended to be decentralised and the *iqtas* were made hereditary, at least in practice. Sultan Firuz Shah allowed the descendants of the dead noble to succeed him in his *iqta* and office. The consequence was that the *Muqtas* were rendered able to consolidate their rule in the vilayets and they carved out independent Sultanates after Firuz Shah's death.

(b) Zamindars

The class of people which came next to the nobility for its

1. Barani, p. 505.
2. Rehla, Ibn Battuta, p. 8
3. Barani, p. 501.
4. Barani, p. 538.

dependence on the appropriation of the surplus produced by the peasants was formed by *zamindars*, who were also called, *Muqaddams*, *Khuts*, *Chaudhris*, *Rai's*, *Ranas* and *Rangas*.¹ In the beginning of the Turkish rule, the *Muqtas* held important towns and cities while the *zamindars* reigned supreme in the countryside. The early Sultans realised the importance of the members of this class and adopted a policy of conciliation towards them. The relevant evidence, found in a document sheds light on the fact that Sultan Iletmish remained content with nominal annual tribute from and the acknowledgement of his overlordsnip by the *zamindars*.² But the *zamindars* had a common tendency to yield to the central authority under the pressure of military force and stop the payment of tribute at the time of the weakening of central power. On Iletmish's death, the powerful *zamindars* not only withheld the payment of revenue but also began to grab new territories with the result that many of them were crushed.³ But such punishments never killed their rebellious spirit finally, the conflict between the *zamindars* and the central authority remained a regular feature through out the 13th century. Though Balban is reported to have cleaned the territories of Amroha, Katehar (modern district of Bareilly), Mewat and Kara of the powerful Rais⁴, yet they are mentioned by the chroniclers for their rebellious activities in these regions during the later period.

1. Barani, p. 539 for his reference to *zamindars*, the hereditary chiefs enjoying significant position in the countryside.

'Ain al-Mulk Mahru sheds valuable light in one of the documents on the matter that the class of *zamindars* included the *muqaddams*, *Mafruzian*, *chaudhriyan*, the *muqaddams*, etc., and they were collectively called *zamindars*.

Insha-i-Mahru, Edited by Prof. Shaikh Abdur Rashid, Lahore, 1965, pp. 16-17.

Sham Siraj 'Afif also refers to the *zamindars* while describing Firuz Shah's first Bengal expedition. He states that the Ravans, Rangas and *zamindars* of Bengal joined Firuz Shah against the rebel ruler of Bengal. *Afif*, p. 112.

2. *Insha-i-Mahru*, p. 17.

3. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, pp. 183, 186, 280.

4. Barani, pp. 37, 38, 57, 58, 59.

(Notwithstanding the permanent conflict between the *zamin-dars* and the state, the Sultans continued to persuade them to co-operate with the state in administering the countryside.) Moreover, the association of the *zamindars*, nodoubt possible as a result of military pressure, paved the way for the cultural fusion of the Indo-Muslim aristocratic class.) By the beginning of the 14th century, the *Khuts*, *Muqaddams* and *chaudhris* appear to have adopted much of the Muslim aristocratic culture. They rode beautiful horses of foreign breed, put on elegant dress, used Persian bows, chewed betel leaves and held convivial meetings.¹ But their lust to grab new territories and withhold the payment of revenue due to the centre, forced Sultan 'Ala u'ddin Khalji to take up severe measures against them. Many of their privileges were abolished and they were reduced to poverty in consequence.² They suffered at least till the overthrow of the Khalji dynasty.

Having realized the value of the service of the *zamindars*, Sultan Ghiyas u'd-din restored their old privileges to them.³ With the restoration of the old privileges, the *zamindars* soon regained their influence in the countryside. Within a short time they were again able to defy the central authority. For example, they rose in rebellion against the successor of Ghiyas u'ddin, Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq when the latter increased the land revenue in the *Doab*. This rebellion was so serious that the administration was completely dislocated and the entire region was laid waste.⁴ In such circumstances, the *zamindars* took to robbery and plunder of the neighbouring regions. The travellers were waylaid with impunity.

However, the *zamindars* were an important element in Indian polity; no Sultan, excepting Sultan 'Ala u'ddin Khalji, ignored the value of their service. Almost all the Sultans sought to maintain cordial relations with the *zamindars*, for

1. *Barani*, p. 291.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 291.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 430.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 473.

they were scattered all over north India. The petty *zamindars*, such as *Khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudhries*, having *zamindari* rights over one, two or a number of villages worked as intermediaries between the state and the peasantry in connection with the revenue administration, while the *Ranas*, *Rais* and *Rangas*, the powerful chiefs holding sway over large territories were left autonomous on the usual terms of paying annual tribute and providing military contingents to the Sultan at the time of need. By the time of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq the *Rais* and *Ranas* were required to live in the capital with their followers. They attended the *durbars* regularly and sat there along with the nobles according to their status.¹

The *zamindari* rights were hereditary. The *zamindars* could alienate their *zamindari* rights either through sale² or by an act of rebellion against the Sultan.

(c) *The Rise of Afghan Nobility under the Tughlaqs and the Saiyid rulers*

It is during the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq that we come across the names of a large number of Afghan nobles. Thus the Afghans who were serving the Sultanate since long could not remain unnoticed by the Sultan. They were given high posts in government service. These Afghan nobles had a

1. *Afif*, pp. 280-281. One of the *Rais* enjoyed such a high status that he was allowed to use two umbrellas bestowed upon him by Sultan Firuz Shah as a mark of high favour.

Many of these *zamindars* mustered great strength after the death of Firuz Shah. Rai Adhran and Rai Sabir organized resistance against the Sultan and seized the towns of Chandwar, Bhogaon, Patiali, Phapoond, Mahoni, Jalesar, Kampil belonging to the vilayet of Etawah. Even Gwalior was captured by one of them. They remained untouched for a long time and could be suppressed by Bahlul Lodi. *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, pp. 172-3. *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, ff. 419a, 429b, 430a.

2. The evidence about the sale of *zamindari* rights in the early period is not available in any Indian chronicle. Only Ibn Battuta sheds light on this matter when he states that a number of villages were purchased for the upkeep of the tomb of Sultan Mubarak Shah. Khalji and Kitchen attached to it (the tomb).

sizable following of their own kinsmen, and took advantage of the imperial favour shown to them to build up their military strength. Malik Shahu Lodi even went to the extent of assuming sovereignty in 1334 A. D. by killing Bihzad, the *na'ib* of Multan. The rebellion of Malik Shahu Lodi was so serious that the Sultan himself had to march towards Multan. Thereupon Malik Shahu Lodi gave up courage, sued for pardon and at once left for 'Afghanistan' with his Afghan followers.¹ The other important Afghan nobles who rose to prominence during the period were Malik Khattab Afghan, Qazi Jalal Afghan and Malik Makh Afghan.

Malik Khattab held the charge of the fort of Rapri. As there were powerful and refractory *zamindars* around the fort, he remained engaged in keeping them under control. On a certain occasion, the *zamindars* joined hands and besieged Rapri with a force of 15,000 soldiers. Malik Khattab appealed to the Sultan for help, but the latter was unable to send reinforcements. The Malik thereupon collected three hundreds of the Afghans, an equal number of slaves and about four hundred other men, and in a fierce battle routed the army of the *zamindars*.² Later, the Sultan became doubtful of his loyalty in 1345 A.D., when Malik Makh Afghan rebelled, and threw him in the prison along with other Afghan *amirs*. But shortly afterwards he was released and restored to his previous position.³ On the death of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq he supported

1. Barani uses the name 'Afghanistan' in its strictly literal sense when he says:

شاهو از بلخاک دست برداشت و نوبه کرد و ملتان را ترک داد با افغانان خود در افغانستان رفت -

Barani, pp. 482-3., See also Mahdi Husain, *Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq* p. 180.

The author of the *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi* says that Shahu went to the Sulaiman mountains where the Afghans of his tribe resided. Bahmad Khan, *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, f. 491 b.

2. *Ibn Battuta*, p. 162.

3. Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Bib. Ind., p. 50.

Cf. *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, f. 506 b.

Khawja Jahan Ayaz but offered allegiance to Firuz Shah along with the latter.

Qazi Jalal Afghan was posted with his Afghan followers in Gujarat. He suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the royalists and was killed in the battle.¹

Malik Makh Afghan was one of the *amiran-i-sada* posted in the vilayet of Daulatabad.² He held a rank of 2,000 *sawars*. In 1345 A.D. he was summoned along with the other *amirs* to Gujarat to help the Sultan against the rebels. Fearing that the Sultan may be suspecting him of complicity with his fellow Afghan nobles in Gujarat, and suspecting that the Sultan having been led to believe that the *amiran-i-sada* were 'wicked' might be contemplating their destruction, Malik Makh also raised the banner of revolt. His fellow nobles spread the royal umbrella upon him and proclaimed him as Sultan Nasir al-Din.³ Soon afterwards he gathered 30,000 *sawars* and destroyed all those who were not willing to co-operate with him. Thereafter he divided the whole of the vilayet of Daulatabad among his supporters as maintenance-*iqtas*.

Being informed of this development, the Sultan left Gujarat for Daulatabad. The rebels also came out with the determination to face him. In a fierce battle near Daulatabad they were routed after having sustained heavy casualties. But Sultan Nasir al-Din (Makh Afghan), Hasan Kango and the other important rebels escaped from the battlefield. The fort of Daulatabad was besieged by the Sultan. About this time the Sultan heard the news of the rebellion of Targhi in Gujarat. Leaving everything unsettled, he rushed back to Gujarat. After the Sultan's withdrawal Hasan Kango inflicted a crushing defeat on the remaining royal forces.⁴

Sultan Nasir al-Din (Makh Afghan) then voluntarily abdicated in favour of Hasan Kango who had become more powerful

1. Ibn Battuta, p. 92.

Cf. *Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*, pp. 181-2.

2. Barani, p. 514.

3. Cf. Mahdi Husain, *Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*, p. 184.

4. Barani, pp. 515-15, 520.

among the rebel nobles and effaced himself from the political scene.¹

Although the rebellions of Qazi Jalal and Malik Makh led to the temporary eclipse of the Afghan nobles, these incidents reveal that by this time the Afghans had come to occupy an important position in the Sultanate. Many Afghan officers rose to prominence in the Deccan, while Afghan officers and soldiers continued to be recruited by the non-Afghan nobles in their military contingents.²

Sultan Firuz Shah's attitude towards the Afghan nobles was also sympathetic. Malik Bir Afghan was the *Muqta* of the vilayet of Bihar; he was succeeded on his death, by his son, Daud Khan.³ Muhammad Shah Afghan was entrusted with the charge of the newly-constructed fort of Tughluqpur (formerly known as Akhal) to keep a watch on the turbulent *zamindars* of the vilayet of Etawah.⁴ On his death, the Sultan allowed his sons, Sirbali Khan and Mahmud Khan to retain their father's *iqta*⁵, though the former was thrown into prison for some time. Malik Khattab also seems to have continued as the *Muqta* of Rapri.⁶ The recruitment of Afghans in the armies of the non-Afghan nobles was also continued. For example, Malik, Marwan the *Muqta* of Multan, is reported to have employed a number of Afghans, among whom was Malik Bahram, the ancestor of Sultan Bahlul.⁷

During the period of the successors of Firuz Shah also, the Afghan nobles maintained their position in the Sultanate of Delhi. Sarbali Khan, whom Sultan Firuz Shah had thrown into prison, was reinstated by Sultan Tughluq Shah II (1388

1. Barani, 520. Also *Firishta*, Vol. II, p. 522.

2. See *Ibn Battuta*, p. 97.

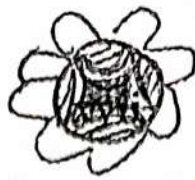
3. Yahiya Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, Bib. Ind., p. 123.
Tarikh-i-Muhammdī, f. 417a.

4. *Ibid.*, f. 412.

5. *Ibid.*, f. 412a.

6. *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, p. 135.

7. See *Firishta*, Vol. I, p. 173.



A.D. 1389 A.D).¹ But 'soon, with the weakening of the Sultanate, the position of the *Muqta* posted in the vilayet of Etawah became untenable. Therefore Sarbali Khan, and his brothers, Mahmud Khan, Sulaimn Khan and Nizam Khan had to leave for Kalpi where they entered the service of its *Muqta*, Mahmud Khan in 1394. In 1405 A.D. Daulat Khan Lodi was entrusted with the *faujdari* of Miyan-i-Doab² while Malik Asad Khan Lodi was appointed as the *Muqta* of the extensive *shiq* of Sambhal.³ Likewise, Husain Khan Afghan, the descendant of Malik Khattab Afghan, held the *iqta* of Rapri.⁴

Afghan But the political ascendancy of the Afghans in northern India begins from the time of the Saiyid rulers of Delhi. They largely depended for their power on the Afghans. It was during their period that the Afghans became conscious of their power, for many of them, especially those belonging to the Lodi tribe held important *shiqs* and *iqtas* in the Sultanate of Delhi which was much reduced in area. Amongst them Malik Shah Bahram Lodi, (afterwards Islam Khan) was assigned the territory of Sirhind by Khizr Khan Saiyid in 1417 A.D. He had under him 12,000 Afghan and Mughal *sawars*. He was succeeded by his nephew, Bahlul, as the *Muqta* of Sirhind.⁵ Malik Sulaiman

1. *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, f. 418b.

2. *Firishta*, Vol. I, p. 160. Daulat Khan Lodi acquired supreme power at Delhi in 1412 after the death of Sultan Mahmud.

Cf. The summary of the writer's paper, "The Life and Times of Daulat Khan Lodi", The Proceedings of all India History Congress, 1960.

3. *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, p. 176.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

5. *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, pp. 195-6.

6. *Firishta*, Vol. I, p. 173.

Rizq Allah Mushtaqi, the author of the *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, says that Balu (the former name of Bahlul) carried on the trade of horses in India before he entered the royal service during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Shah Saiyid. 'Abdullah, the author of the *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, copies this statement but Nizam al-Din refutes it. He says that it was wrong to say that Bahlul and his uncle, Islam Khan, dealt in the trade of horses. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*. Vol. I, p. 297.

Firishta's statement is conclusive. He says that Bahram, the ancestor of Bahlul, came with the Afghan merchants to Multan where he entered the service of Malik Marwan, the *Muqta* during Sultan Firuz Shah's reign. *Firishta*, Vol. I, p. 173.

Lodi enjoyed a good status in Multan where he was killed fighting against Shaikh 'Alli, a Mughal invader of Kabul in 1418 A.D.¹ The extensive *iqta* of Rapri was still held by Husain Khan Afghan, who was succeeded by his son, Qutb Khan Afghan, during the reign of Sultan Mubarak Shah Saiyid.² Malik Allahdad Khan Lodi was assigned Tabarhinda in 836 A.H./1432 from where he was driven away by Jasrath Khokkar in the same year.³ After that he seems to have been assigned the extensive *shiq* of Sambhal where he turned hostile to Sarwar al-Mulk who had got Sultan Mubarak Shah assassinated in 1434 A. D. Shortly afterwards he succeeded in destroying Sarwar al-Mulk and his party with the help of the other nobles loyal to the Sultan. Sultan Muhammad Shah, the successor of Sultan Mubarak Shah, thereupon, honoured the loyal nobles with high titles and offices. For his part Allahdad Khan refused to accept any title and recommended his younger brother for the royal favour. The Sultan conferred the title of Darya Khan upon his younger brother.⁴

A passing reference may be made here to the Afghans who had settled in Hindustan under the service of the Sultans for generations. They were fully Indianized, and had adopted Indian customs and manner. The high nobles among them lived a life of aristocracy like their fellow non-Afghan grandees. Their contingents comprised non-Afghan *sawars* more than the Afghans, as in the case of the contingent of Malik Khattab. It may also be pointed out that they had developed an attachment to the local soil in northern India as well as in the Daccan where they had been posted by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq.

In addition to the Delhi Sultanate, the Afghans had established themselves in various provincial kingdoms. In Gujarat, Afghan Khan was one of the leading nobles under Sultan

1. *Ta'rikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, p. 223.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 214; also *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 98.

3. *Ibid.*, 226.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 272.

Muzaffar Shah (1403-1410) and Sultan Ahmad Shah (1410-1442).¹ He was defeated in Nandurbar by the rebel, Mu'id al-Din Firuz Khan, who advanced his claim to the throne against Ahmad Shah.² Another powerful Afghan noble was Sulaiman Afghan, known as A'zam Khan, who rebelled against Ahmad Shah in 1431 and invited Hoshang Shah of Malwa to overthrow the Sultan of Gujarat. But the invader was defeated and A'zam Khan also fled to Malwa.³

A study of the history of Bengal reveals that the Afghans had settled down in that kingdom in large numbers long before the establishment of the Lodi Empire, and continued to remain there even when the Lodi Sultan, Bahlul called them to join his forces. Though the medieval Persian writers do not mention the names of the nobles, it appears that the number of the Afghan nobles in the kingdom of Bengal was considerable and that they played an important role in conquests and administration.⁴ Similarly, the Sharqi Sultans of Jaunpur also employed Afghans in their army. Sultan Mubarak Shah Sharqi is reported to have a large number of Afghans, Tajiks and Rajputs in his army; the relevant reference also suggests that there were Afghan, Mughal, Tajik and Rajput nobles under whose command the *sawars* might have served.⁵

(c) BID FOR SUPREMACY

(i) *The Establishment of the Lodi Monarchy*

Slowly but steadily the Afghans had assumed the position of a pressure-group in the rapidly disintegrating Sultanate of Delhi. Amongst them Bahlul, the successor of Islam Khan Lodi, became the most powerful noble. He increased his contingent

1. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 98.

2. Sikandar, *Mira't-i-Sikandari*, p. 22.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

4. Salim, *Riyad al-Salatin*, Bib. Ind., pp. 128, 133, 134.
Firishta, Vol. II, pp. 301-2.

5. *Firishta*, Vol. II, p. 305.

to 20,000 *sawars*.¹ The strength of his contingent, comprising Afghan, Mughal and also Indian soldiers, and the weak position of Sultan Muhammad Shah (1434-47) caused by chaos and anarchy, led Bahlul to aspire for sovereignty.

Though the civil war, caused by the assassination of Sultan Mubarak Shah ended in favour of Sultan Muhammad Shah, the latter could not rise equal to the situation. He plunged headlong into a life of ease and comfort. In 1336, after his return from Multan and Samana, he gave up taking any interest in the affairs of his kingdom. The Langahs began to create trouble in the territory of Multan, while Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi seized several eastern *pargannas*, but the Sultan moved neither against the Langahs nor against the Sharqi Sultan.² However, the strong nobles, who held large *shiqs*, were disappointed by the incompetence of their Sultan and began to strengthen their own position and resources in their respective territories.

It was during this time that Majlis-i-'ali Islam Khan Lodi died and was succeeded in his *iqta* by his nephew, Bahlul according to his will.³ Qutb Khan Lodi, son of Islam Khan, advanced his own claim to his father's *iqta* and also sought help from the centre. The Sultan deputed his wazir, Husam Khan, against Bahlul, but he was routed by the latter. Thereafter Bahlul wrote to the Sultan promising his loyalty, provided Husam Khan were to be killed and Hamid Khan, his friend, were to be appointed wazir instead. The Sultan succumbed to the pressure of Bahlul and acted according to his wishes.⁴

1. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 171. *Firishta* refers to his contingent on his arrival in Delhi to rescue Sultan Muhammad Shah against Sultan Mahmud Kha'ji of Malwa. He says :

ملک بھلول با لشکر افغانان و مغل نہوانداز بودند

Malik Bahlul came with his army which was mostly composed of the Afghan and Mughal bow-men.

Cf. *The First Afghan Empire*, p. 50.

2. *Badauni*, Vol. I, p. 303.
3. Islam Khan Lodi appears to have died after 1436 as the contemporary account shows. *Ta'rikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, p. 243.
4. Cf. *The First Afghan Empire*, pp. 48-9.



In 1440 the Malikzadas of Mewat invited Sultan Mahmud Khalji of Malwa to capture Delhi. As Bahlul had assured Sultan Muhammad of his loyalty in return for the murder of Husam Khan, he was called for help. On this occasion Bahlul not only succeeded in getting the upper hand over the army of Malwa but also established his superiority over the other nobles of Delhi.¹ He also got an opportunity to judge personally the extent of the weakness of the central government. In 1441 Bahlul was ordered to destroy Jasrath Khokhar, the sworn enemy of the house of Khizar Khan Saiyid. On Bahlul's approach Jasrath made peace with him saying that he was the enemy of the family of Khizr Khan only and instigated him to seize the throne from Muhammad Shah.² It was from about this time Bahlul started inviting Afghan tribesmen from Roh and reinforced his contingents.³

At this time all the nobles in the territories around Delhi had become virtually independent of the Sultan as none of them is reported to have helped him against the Sultan of Malwa. Therefore, it became easy for Bahlul to defy the centre and to act on the advice of the Khokkar chief. First he brought the territories of Hisar, Firuza, Samana, Dipalpur and Lahore including the region to its north-west⁴ under his control. Thereafter, he extended his rule upto Panipat,⁵ and thus the capture of Delhi became a question of time.

The date of Malik Bahlul's first invasion of Delhi is not given by the medieval chroniclers, but it appears that it occurred towards the close of the reign of Muhammad Shah (between 1446 and 1447), for the latter is said to have died just after the invader's retreat in 1447.⁶ On the death of Muhammad Shah,

1. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 286. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 4a for the title of Khan-i-Khanan which Bahlul received in reward on this occasion.
2. Abdul Haq, *Tarikh-i-Haqqi*, MS. Aligarh.
3. *Firishta*, p. 174.
4. *Firishta*, p. 174; Cf. *The First Afghan Empire*, p. 50.
5. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 291; Cf. *The First Afghan Empire*, p. 51.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 296.

his son, Ala al-Din ascended the throne. The nobles present in Dehli, whose names have not been recorded in the chronicles, took him to Biyana against its rebel *Muqta*, Daud Khan Auhadi. But the new Sultan returned from the way on a false rumour that Sultan Mahmud of Jaunpur was proceeding towards Delhi for its capture, although his nobles insisted on continuing the march.¹ Soon after his return to Delhi, Bahlul again came and invested the fort of Siri but this time also he was unsuccessful (1448).²

Nizam al-Din's account of Bahlul's second invasion shows that Qutb Khan Afghan of Rapri, Isa Khan of Kol and Rai Pratap of Bhogaon were interested in the survival of the Saiyid monarchy and were afraid that the dynastic changed might threaten their well-established position. They helped the Sultan against Bahlul and advised him after the latter's retreat that Hamid Khan should be put to death.³ Thereupon the Sultan threw Hamid Khan into prison and also took him in 1448 to Badaun where he had decided to stay.⁴ The charge of Delhi was entrusted by the Sultan to his two brothers-in-law. In his absence they quarreled and one of them killed the other, who was soon after himself was murdered at the instigation of Husam Khan, the friend of Hamid Khan.

Hamid Khan also succeeded in making good his escape from the prison and came to Delhi where the local people welcomed him.⁵ He drove away the royal *harem* from Delhi and occupied the fort along with the royal property left there. Hamid Khan then consulted Husam Khan as to what should be done for the

1. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, Vol. I, p. 136.

2. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 296.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 297; *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 7.

4. Sultan 'Ala' al-Din settled in Badaun in 1448 as it was more secure than Delhi. Moreover, the *shiq* of Badaun was an extensive territory comprising the *parganas* from Aonla (in Bereilley district) upto the boundary of Khairabad.

Cf. Dr. K. S. Lal, *A Peaceful Abdication in Medieval India*, *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, 1957.

5. *Badauni*, Vol. I, p. 305.

defence of Delhi against the possible enemies. They decided to invite Bahlul from Sirhind.¹

None of the chroniclers mentions the date of the arrival of Bahlul in Delhi and the period of co-operation between him and Hamid Khan. In the beginning Hamid Khan was afraid of the Afghans and, therefore, never allowed Bahlul to enter the fort with a large number of his followers.² However, Bahlul and his followers succeeded in shaking off his doubt by their studied simplicity and foolishness and ultimately arrested him by treachery. Then Bahlul ascended the throne in 1451.

It would thus appear from the circumstances in which Sultan Bahlul ascended the throne that he did not owe his accession to the unified support of the Afghan nobility. But Bahlul succeeded in unifying the Afghan nobles under his own banner, and with their help not only consolidated the position of the central authority but ultimately established a regime in which the Afghans were in a predominant position.

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1. *Waq'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 4a. T. D. p. 7.
2. *Ibid.*, f. 4b.

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CHAPTER I

DESPOTISM OF SULTAN BAHUL

The Lodi Empire under Sultan Bahlul has long been criticized as a loose confederacy of the Afghan tribes. But a careful study of his reign shows that he was the only Sultan who succeeded in reviving the Delhi Sultanate and bringing the disruptive forces under check. It is also to his credit that he tried gradually to raise the prestige of the crown. To understand this, one needs a closer study of the political conditions prevailing in northern India before his rise to sovereignty.

The first half of the 15th century was marked by the prevalence of chaos and anarchy. In Delhi itself the sovereign power had crumbled and the nobles were looking to their own interest or striving to secure the person of the Sultan. The history of the reigns of the last Saiyid rulers, Sultan Muhammad Shah and 'Ala al-Din Shah, tells this sad tale. The natural trend of anarchy could not be easily arrested, and under Sultan 'Ala al-Din, it reached its climax. The Sultan saved his life by leaving Delhi to be occupied by any ambitious man.

In view of his difficulties Bahlul tried to win over the favour of his nobles, 'ulama and other influential people. His political behaviour was shaped only by the need of the time, for his predecessors had totally failed in checking the disintegration of the Sultanate on account of the insubordination of their nobles. In the beginning of his reign he could not help behaving respectfully towards his nobles. Aspiring for anything more would have hampered the zeal of his Afghan nobles and landed the Sultan in great difficulties. But it is a fact that he got rid of every undesirable noble—Afghan as well as non-Afghan—whenver it was necessary and possible. He always kept a vigilant eye on the ambitions of his nobles and severely dealt with them whenever anyone of them was suspected of the attempt to carve out an independent principality for himself.

① The high nobles were assigned, no doubt, large iqtas where they enjoyed autonomy, but everyone of them had to be obedient to the Sultan. Even the slightest indication of disobedience on the part of a noble could bring about his ruin. Here a few cases may be cited to show that even the Afghan nobles whom Bahlul and his uncle, Islam Khan Lodi, had brought up and raised to dignity, could turn disloyal to the Sultan in their selfish interest and the latter humiliated or destroyed them as the circumstances allowed. For instance, in 1466 Ahmad Khan Jilwani, son of Yusuf Khan Jilwani, the old servant of Bahlul, changed his allegiance to Sultan Husain Sharqi in Biyana because Sultan Husain was certain to liquidate the Afghan power in no time.¹ Shaikh Jamali, a contemporary sufi writer gives a detailed account of the affairs of Ahmad Khan Jilwani, the *Muqta* of Biyana. "During the period when Shaikh Sama al-Din stayed in the *Khitta-i-* Biyana, Sultan Ahmad Jilwani came one day with Saiyid Khonda Mir Rasuldar, entitled as Murtaza Khan, and some other companions. At this time Sultan Husain Jaunpuri was bent upon conquering Darul-Mulk Delhi. This Sultan Ahmad was a staunch supporter of the latter. In short, he stood before the saint and requested him to pray for the conquest of Delhi by Sultan Husain as he was a grand King. The Saint got infuriated and said: "Oh Ahmad! Your father has been brought up by him (Sultan Bahlul). It is not becoming on your part to turn disloyal to the salt. I won't pray for the success of a tyrant who has neither regard for justice nor fear of Allah (God)". When Sultan Ahmad heard it from the saint, he felt ashamed and gave up the hope of the success of Sultan Husain (of Jaunpur). Then he tried to win back Bahlul's confidence and joined him."²

The fall of Tatar Khan Yusuf Khail is a case in point. He was the *muqta* of all the trans-Sutlej *sarkars*, i.e., Sialkot, Lahore and Dipalpur and had 15,000 *sawars* in his service. Being in-charge of large and rich territories,

¹ *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I/307.

² *Siyar al-Arifin*, p. 177.

he developed an ambition for sovereignty during the last years of Bahlul's reign. He also seized certain *parganas* of the *khalsa* and replaced the royal officials by his own men. Prince Nizam Khan (later Sultan Sikandar) was, thereupon, deputed with high nobles like 'Umar Khan Sarwani, Mian Sa'id Farmuli and their sons and relations; Nasir Khan Nuhani and Dariya Khan Nuhani, the sons of Masnad-i-'ali Mubarak Khan Nuhani, to deal with Tatar Khan. Though the latter fought with all vigour and determination near Ambala, he could not succeed against the royalists for the disloyalty of his officers who fled away from the battlefield leaving their leader to be slain¹ (1485).

In reality the fate of Tatar Khan Yusuf Khail was a warning to all those Afghan as well as non-Afghan nobles who might think of defying the royal authority. Similarly, the case of Ahmad Khan Jilwani, the *muqta* of the *sarkar* of Biyana further sheds light on the relationship between the crown and the Afghan nobles. Ahmad Khan Jilwani had succeeded in rewinning the confidence of Sultan Bahlul as already mentioned. But, on the death of the Sultan, he again turned rebel against his successor and assumed sovereignty in Biyana.² As Sultan Sikandar was busy settling his affairs with the royal princes in the beginning of his reign, he could not march on Biyana till 1490 A. D. In 1490 Ahmad Khan Jilwani died and was succeeded by his eldest son, Sultan Ashraf. Sultan Ashraf failed in holding out against the Sultan who had laid siege to his fort. At last he surrendered the fort and went to Gwalior for refuge.³

Besides, the fact that Sultan Bahlul could transfer any noble from his *iqta* must have kept the ambitions of the nobles

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 9b-10a.

The date of the battle has been written approximately because Rizqullah Mushtaqi says that Prince Nizam Khan was 15 years old when the battle took place. The Prince ascended the throne at the age of 18 years, i. e., three years later.

2. *Ibid.*, ff. 67b-68a.

3. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, I/175.

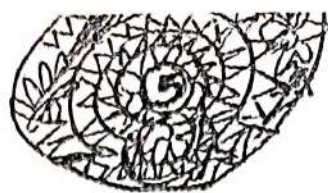
under check. In short, all the nobles were knit together to serve the Sultan with unwavering loyalty as a result of his wise policy, and all the possibilities of anarchy were easily done away with. No noble could have the courage to raise his head against his sovereign. [It is really difficult to agree with Dr. R. P. Tripathi who observes: "Bahlul Lodi, in keeping with the sentiments of the Afghans and the tradition of his father, claimed to be nothing more than one among the peers. He was quite satisfied with the title of Sultan and the leadership of the Afghans. In his days the Afghan empire was a sort of confederation of tribes presided over by the Lodi King."]¹

Dr. Tripathi has based his statement on the authority of the *Afsana-i-Shahan*, but most of the stories recorded in it are figments of the author's imagination. His theory is based on the tradition that Malik Kala, the father of Bahlul, became the Sultan of Delhi after he had defeated Jasrath Khokkar. On his accession, he ordered a large throne to be prepared and sat on it with his thirty-four nobles. Since then the Lodi Sultans treated their nobles as their brothers.²

1. Vide Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 83.

2. The author of the *Afsana-i-Shahan* says ;

دکالا را مردمان گفتند که شما را حق تعالی از کرم عظیم و
 لطف عظیم بادشاهی داد - الحال شما بر نام خود خطبه بخوانانید
 و بر تخت نشیند - پس سلطان کالا فرمود چنان تخت راست
 باید نمود که همه برادران ما بنشینند - چون این سخن کالا
 فرمود - مقربان عرض کردند که تخت آن مقدار می باشد که
 بادشاه تنها بنشیند و همراه بادشاه مقدار پنججاه و شصت هزار
 سوار برادران آن طور چگونه تخت راست خواهد شد که همه
 برادران بر آن خواهند نشست - باز فرمودند که باری این مقدار
 باید راست که بروسی و چهل برادران نشیند - چون ملک بکالا
 مسلم شد نام سلطانی بر کالا افزودند - همچنین سیزده سال و
 نه ماه و یک روز و پنج گهزی بادشاهی کرد -



As far as the historical fact is concerned, neither Jasrath Khokkar nor Malik Kala acquired the status of a sovereign. Malik Kala was an ordinary man and his brother, Islam Khan Lodi, had given him some villages out of his *iqta* for his maintenance. Later on, he was killed fighting there against the Niazi Afghans.¹ It may also be pointed out that the Lodi Afghans were accustomed to the Indian despotism, for they had served under the Ilbari, Khalji and the Tughlaq Sultans. They had shaken off all the tribal leanings and behaved like the cultured Indian nobles. That is why Khan-i Jahan Lodi sided with Khan-i-Khanan Farmuli in supporting the succession of Prince Nizam Khan, born of a Hindu gold-smith's daughter, against the wishes of some mischievous Afghans who wanted the Prince, born of a pure Afghan mother, to be their king.²

(An analysis of the data contained in the Persian literature reveals the fact that Bahlul was a despot in the true sense of the word and succeeded in consolidating his position at a critical time. The view that the Sultanate of Delhi under him was a confederacy of the Afghan tribes is not borne out by historical facts and may be dismissed as an attempt to misread the history of his reign.) It should be remembered that Bahlul was so ambitious before his accession that he defied the authority of his masters, Sultan Muhammad Shah and Ala al-Din Shah

(Continued from the previous page)

People said to Kala: "God has favoured you with kingship. Now you should have the *khutba* read in your name and sit on the throne." Sultan Kala, thereupon, ordered (his associates) to get prepared a large throne where all his brethren (Afghan followers) could sit. Then his associates said: "Then throne should be of a size permitting the king to sit all alone, because there are fifty seven thousand followers with him. How can all of them sit on the same throne?" He (Kala) again said: "A throne should be prepared which may accommodate at least 34 brethren". As Kala's authority was established, his royal name spread far and wide. He ruled for thirteen years, nine months, one day and five *gharis* (hours) *Afsana-i-shahan*, ff. 9a-14a.

1. *Firishta*, p. 173.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 169.



with impunity, brought the whole of the Western territories (Lahore, Sialkot, Sirhind, Hisar Firuza, Samana and Dipalpur) under his sway and twice attacked Delhi, but in vain.¹ Moreover, he was an experienced captain of war who always got victory over his adversaries in war. It is, therefore, unthinkable that such a successful statesman and military general as Bahlul should have established a confederacy of the Afghan tribes. Had it really been so, the Lodi Empire would have broken away into tribal principalities even during Bahlul's own life-time. Secondly, the Farmuli nobles and other non-Afghan nobles also might have followed their example in carving out independent principalities for themselves.

A passing reference may be made here to the composition of the nobility of Sultan Bahlul. He came to Delhi for its occupation with a group of his trusted officers who were serving his house since the time of his uncle. The most important of them were *Masnad-i-'ali* Tatar Khan Yusuf Khail,² Mubarak Khan Nuhani, Yusuf Khan Jilwani,³ the father of Ahmad Khan Jilwani, the *muqta* of Biyana, and the father of Mian Muhammad Khan Farmuli⁴. Qutb Khan Lodi, the son of Islam Khan, and Khan-i Jahan Lodi, the son of Firuz Khan, the younger uncle of Bahlul, dominated the court on account of their relationship with the Sultan⁵.

There were other high as well as small nobles, who appear to have held *iqtas* in the territories occupied by Bahlul after his accession. The important nobles among them were Jamal Khan Sarangkani (Lodi), Khan-i-'Azam 'Umar Khan Sarwani and 'Isa Khan Lodi, one of the relations of the Sultan. Jamal Khan Sarangkani held Hisar Firuza, Khan-i Azam 'Umar Khan Sarwani, the *parganas* of Shahabad, Banor, Pa'il and

1. *Firishta*, p. 174.

2. *Baburnama* (Turki Text), Mrs. Beveridge, Vol. I, f. 225b. *Baburnama*, Persian tr. by Abdal Rahim Khan-i-Khanan Ms. Aligarh, f. 204a.

3. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* p. 299; *Siyar al-Arifin*, p. 178.

4. *Tarikh-i-Sher-Shahi*, f. 53a.

5. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 66a; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/294.

some other between them in the *sarkar* of Sirhind,¹ while 'Isa Khan Lodi was assigned Bhogaon, Kampil and Patiali *parganas* for maintenance². Those who held the lower ranks were the Surs and the Farmulis.³ Among Surs Himat Khan was the

1. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 6a.

2. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 315.

3. It is commonly held that the Farmulis were Afghans because of their settlement in the country of the Afghans; they had adopted certain local customs and, therefore, looked like the Afghans. They resided in the Farmul region near Ghazni. This region is still called Farmul. Mrs. Beveridge holds them to be of the Turk and Tajik stock. But our contemporary authority Babur says: "Of Farmul were the Shaikhzadas, descendants of Shaikh Muhammad Musalman, who were so much in favour during the Afghan period in Hindustan." *Baburnama*, i/220 also for Mrs. Beveridge's opinion about the origin of the Farmulis.

Mushtaqi also throws some light on the origin of the Farmulis when he refers to Sa'id Khan Yusuf Khail Lodi's remark against *Masnad-i-'ali* Mian Husain Farmuli that Sa'id Khan said to Rana Sanga about the *Masnad i-'ali*:

ددایشان شیخ زاده اند - چنانچه در میان شما برهن -
ما ایشان را تربیت کردیم ، ما برادر بادشاه هستیم به حساب
افغانان بادشاهی به شاهو خیل می رسد یا یوسف خیل -
دیگران همه نوکر اند -

"They are Shaikhzadas like the Brahmans among you. We have raised them. We are the brethren of the King. According to the custom of the Afghans, sovereignty will rest either with the Shahu Khail or the Yusuf Khail. The rest are the servants." See *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 62a.

In the same way 'Isa Khan Lodi scolded Khan-i-Khanan Farmuli when the issue of succession was being discussed among the nobles on the death of Sultan Bahlul. 'Isa Khan Lodi asked Khan-i-Khanan Farmuli not to interfere with the affairs of the Afghans who were related to the Sultan while he was only a servant. Khan-i-Khanan Farmuli, thereupon, replied that he was the servant of Sultan Sikandar and not of anybody else. See *Firishta*, p. 179.

Hafiz Rahmat Khan, who did not know much of the origin of the Farmulis and the Farmul region from where the latter had migrated to India, also throws some light on the matter. He says that the Farmulis were not of the Afghan origin. See *Khulasa*, p. 52b.

highest noble but below the rank of a *malik*. He was assigned the *parganas* of Tihara and Ludhyana.¹ The Farmuli nobles like Mian Gada'i Farmuli and Khan-i Khanan Farmuli appear to have been small nobles during the early years of Bahlul's reign, but they also rose to prominence in course of the expansion of the empire.² As regards Mian Husain Farmuli, he remained a man of no consequence till Bahlul's death.³

✓ The fact that all the territories seized from the Sharqi Sultan were assigned by Bahlul either to the princes of the blood, his near relations or his old followers, clearly indicates that the Sultan took all necessary measures to safeguard his dynastic interests. For instance, Prince Barbak Shah, son of Bahlul, was entrusted with the government of the vilayet of Jaunpur; Prince 'Azam Humayun, son of Prince Bayazid, the

(Continued from the previous page)

The information given by the author of the *Hayat-i-Afghani* is conclusive. He says that "the Farmulis are of the Tajik origin." Further he says that the Farmulis called themselves the descendants of the Khaljis who established their rule in India in 1296 A. D. See *Hayat-i-Afghani*, p. 455.

However, the Farmuli nobles of the Afghan period did not belong to the Afghan stock. They were held in high esteem and confidence by the Lodi Sultans. They counter-balanced the Afghan nobles. During Sultan Ibrahim's reign Mian Mustafa Farmuli and his younger brother, Bayazid Farmuli, rendered important service to the Sultan by fighting against the rebel *amirs*. Mian Mustafa's father-in-law, Mian Muhammad Farmuli, the famous *muqta'* of Awadh and Bahraich was Sultan Bahlul's sister's son. It shows that the Farmulis were serving the house of Bahlul since the time when Islam Khan Lodi held Sirhind as his *iqta*. It also indicates the nearness of the Farmulis to the Lodi Sultans. Sultān Bahlul was so liberal that he gave his own daughter to 'Abdullah Quraishi, a pious descendant of Shaikh Baha al-Din Zakariya, in marriage. See Shaikh 'Abdul Haq's *Akhbar-al-Akhyar*, p. 314.

1. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 63.
2. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 66a.
3. *Ibid.*, ff. 60a-b.

During the reign of Sultan Bahlul he served as a *sawar* in the royal army.

eldest son of Bahlul who died in his father's life time, the *sarkars* of Lucknow and Kalpi; Prince 'Alam Khan (later Sultan 'Ala al-Din) was assigned the large *iqta* of Rapri and Chandwar. Khan-i Jahan Lodi held the *sarkar* of Badaun. Likewise the extensive territories of Kara, Awadh and Biyana were held by Mubarak Khan Nuhani, Masand-i Ali Mian Muhammad Farmuli and Ahmad Khan Jilwani, son of Yusuf Khan respectively. Prince Nizam Khan (later Sultan Sikandar) was entrusted with the charge of Daru'l-Mulk Delhi¹

These assignments are indicative of the fact that Sultan Bahlul was very careful in raising his nobles to high dignity and also in assigning them large *iqta*'s. Only the tried persons were relied upon in this connexion. None of the new immigrants from Roh seems to have been honoured with a high rank meant for a high noble. As regards the influx of the Afghan immigrants during his reign, their help was felt in 1452 A.D. when Sultan Mahmud of Jaunpur laid siege to the fort of Delhi at the head of a formidable army. At that time Sultan Bahlul was in Dipalpur with a small following. In this plight he thought that Hindustan could best be held with the support of the Afghans of Roh, for any hope from the Indians was out of question. The only alternative left to Bahlul was to utilize their services against his enemies on the one hand and infuse them with a fresh spirit for making new adventures in the interest of his Empire on the other. He is reported to have said to his nobles: "Let every Afghan tribesman bring his relatives up in a life of indigence. Let them come and take up *iqta*'s in Hind, relieving themselves from strained circumstances, and supporting the state against powerful enemies'.² His nobles appreciated the idea and then the Sultan wrote to the Afghans of Roh: "If my dear friends are pleased to come down to this country, I shall have only the name of king, while each kingdom and territory that has

1. *Firishta*. p. 178; *Taboqat-i-Akbari*, i/312, 315.

2. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 3a.

been conquered and will pass under our control will be shared by us as between brothers."¹

(Bahlul's decision to invite the Afghans from Roh to his help was wise enough from the point of view of political expediency. The Hindu Rajas and Rais had large followings of their kinsmen while the rule of the Muslim Sultans in their provincial kingdoms had developed its roots deeper into the local soil. On the contrary, Bahlul was still a hated stranger in Delhi. So far he could seize hold over Delhi only and outside its limits the powerful noble like Dariya Khan Lodi of Sambhal had already entered the service of Sultan Mahmud Sharqi, while others ruled over their respective territories independent of him. In such circumstances Bahlul could save the throne of Delhi and successfully face his adversaries with a strong force composed of his own men. But how far the Afghans of Roh responded to his call requires a careful examination of the data contained in the medieval chronicles.) 'Abbas Khan Sarwani says that in response to Sultan Bahlul's invitation, the Afghans of Roh turned in large number towards India and joined the Sultan.² Mushtaqi, whose book is the best authority for the period, says that Bahlul got victory over Sultan Mahmud's army of thirty thousand *sawars* at Narila with the help of seven thousand *sawars* only.³ According to the author of the *Tarikh-i Khan-i Jahani*, only ten thousand *sawars* and fifteen thousand foot soldiers came to the Lodi sultan.⁴ The author of the *Tarikh-i Daudi* says that according to some source of information Bahlul's army consisted of fourteen thousand

1. *Tarikh-i-Sher-Shahi*, f. 4a.

2. دیو صول فرامین افغانان دوهه از هر طرف چوں مورد و مانج
بدستور ملازمت سلطان بهلول آمدند۔

Having received the *farmans*, the Afghans of Roh started from all sides like ants and locusts and joined Sultan Bahlul's service. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 4.

2. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 5b.

3. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, i/143.

sawars while other says that it did not exceed seven thousand *sawars*.¹ The numeral strength of Bahlul's army was, however, far less than thirty thousand *sawars* which were detached from the main army and put under the command of Fath Khan to check Bahlul's advance at Narila village and also do away with him.² The Sharqi Sultan also gave 30 war elephants in addition to the *sawars* to Fath Khan while a good number of them was kept busy on the siege under his own command.³

Abbas Khan's statement with regard to the arrival of the Afghans of Roh for the help of the Lodi Sultan in 1452 A.D. is nothing short of exaggeration. It is probable that a few Afghan chiefs might have come for his help. Abbas Khan Sarwani mentions only the name of Kalu Khan of Mahmud Khail, who was wounded in the battle of Narila. As soon as the battle was over, he returned to Roh with other chiefs whose names are not mentioned.⁴ In short, Abbas Khan is wrong in saying that on the invitation of Bahlul the Afghans of Roh flocked to India like ants and locusts. The army of Sultan Bahlul never equalled the Sharqi army in number till the liquidation of the latter. Similarly, the authenticity of the following *farman* with regard to the Sultan's over-generous attitude to the Afghan immigrants is also doubtful. He is reported to have ordered his high nobles: "Present before me every one who comes to Hind from Roh and is willing to enter my service. I shall grant him a *jagir* (*iqta*) more agreeable than he deserves, and if he prefers service under any one of you (nobles), out of ties of kinship, attachment and friendship, you shall offer him satisfactory salary, and if I hear of a single Afghan going back to his country for want of livelihood or employment, I shall remove you from your *jagirs*."⁵ Abbas Khan's account of

1. *Tarikh-i-Dauli*, p 15.

2. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p 301.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 301.

4. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, ff. 4-5.

5. *Ibid* ff 5

Ibrahim and his son, Hasan Sur, shows that the Afghan individuals came to India in search of employment and used to go from one noble to another for a better job.¹ Sometimes they were forced to serve under the non-Afghans for want of encouragement under their own kinsmen during the period under study. Moreover, the non-Afghan nobles could surpass the Afghans in the service of the high Afghan nobles.² There seem to have been a few noble-born Afghan immigrants who thought it derogatory to serve under the nobles and, therefore, directly entered the royal service. But they were never assigned more than a few villages for the maintenance of their followers and families. N'imat Allah mentions Firuz Kakar, a man of important family and tribe of Roh. He came to Hindustan in 1452 A. D. and entered the royal service. Though the Sultan showed him due respect, he was not appointed to any high post or rank. Only a few villages in the *pargana* of Pail in the *sarkar* of Sirhind were assigned to him for maintenance. As Firuz Kakar died towards the close of Bahlul's reign, his son, Luqman, was allowed by the same Sultan to succeed his father in his small *iqta*.³

As a matter of fact Abbas Khan Sarwani and other Afghan chroniclers who have copied him, wrote their books long after the overthrow of the Afghan rule. All of them glorify the Afghan rule and exaggerate the facts regarding the respectful attitude of the Afghan kings towards the Afghans, nobles as well as petty *sawars*. But the *Waqiat-Mushtaqi* and the contemporary hagiological literature, if properly inquired into, helps us to understand the real history. They reveal that only poverty-stricken individuals belonging to different tribes and clans came to India permanently. The respected Afghan chiefs and their followers always hated the idea of settling in India. The Afghan tribesmen had too much love

1. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 6.

2. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 41a-b.

3. *Tarikh-i-Khan-Jahani*, f. ii/485.

for their tribal freedom to sacrifice it for Bahlul. Despite their harsh poverty, most of them never liked to seek their fortune in Hindustan till the fall of the Sur dynasty.¹ They always enjoyed their tribal freedom in the fair air of Roh. Moreover, they looked down upon the Indian Afghans whose forefathers had settled in India long before as the Sunbat Afghans remarked against Mubarak Khan Sur: "You were born in India and know not the ways of Afghans. Hither to the heron has not dared to play the tyrant over the falcon....."²

However, Bahlul succeeded in destroying the powerful Sharqi army in the battle of Narila due to the treacherous flight of Dariya Khan Lodi, an ally of the Sharqi Sultan, who was won over to the side of the Lodi Sultan before the beginning of the battle. His flight caused dismay among the Sharqi *sawars* and led them to turn their back from the battlefield.

Now we may draw the following conclusions :

The high nobles under Sultan Bahlul largely belonged to the Lodi, Nuhani, Sarwani and Jilwani families. (Besides the non-Afghan immigrants from the foreign lands, local Hindu zamindars and the old nobles of the conquered territories were also accepted in the official hierarchy in a good number and they counter-balanced the Afghan nobles.) Among the non-Afghan foreign immigrants, the Shaikhzadas of Farmul rose in high prominence during the Lodi period.³ In short, the nobility under Sultan Bahlul was not a charmed circle where the non-Afghans could be forbidden to enter. Its doors were rather thrown open to all the deserving candidates.⁴

1. *Tazkirat al-Waqi'at*, f. 91b.

2. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, ff. 126-127.

3. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 66a.

4. It is very difficult to give the correct figures of the *amirs* who came from foreign lands to seek job in India during Bahlul's reign. But a few references in the medieval literature shows that the immigrants

The nobles who entered the Sultan's service themselves and their descendants after them, dominated the political scene throughout the period. The successors of Sultan Bahlul, Sultan Sikandar and Sultan Ibrahim replaced at certain times the elder brothers with the younger ones in their *iqta's* and ranks if the latter succeeded in poisoning the royal ears against their elders. Sometimes the officers of the old nobles were also allowed to succeed their master in preference to their sons, but it did occasionally happen and even then the descendants of the dead nobles were granted maintenance allowances and *iqta's* somewhere else as it will be discussed later on.

Moreover, the Afghan immigrants, such as Niazi, Sur, Karrani and others do not seem to have been given high posts and ranks in the army or the administration of the Empire. The Sur and the Niazi Afghans remained so insignificant that none of them could rise to the status of a *Malik* during the whole of the Lodi period. Mushtaqi attributes it to Sultan Bahlul's suspicion about the ambitious nature of the Surs and disloyalty of the Niazis to their master.¹ The reason was that Bahlul's father, Kala Lodi was

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came even from the Arabian countries. The names of Shaikh Hussam and Ahmad Khan Shami can be cited in this matter. Both of them were honoured by high ranks and posts. *Lataf-i-Qudduis*, Shaikh Rukn al-Din, p. 107; *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, p. 299.

1. Sultan Bahlul is reported to have bequeathed the following will to Sultan Sikandar:

دداول هيچ کس را از قوم سور امرا و خوانين نکرني که
اينها دماغ پادشاهي دارند دوم نيازي را اصلا نوکر نکرني که
مردم بے ملاحظه اند - حق نمک را نگاه ندارند -

Firstly do not raise anyone of the Sur tribe to the dignity of noble and grandee, for they have ambition of sovereignty; secondly never employ any Niazi as they are uncultured people and have no sense of loyalty to the salt. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 47b.

killed fighting against the Niazis.¹ This act of the Niazis led Bahlul and his successors to hate them and also doubt their loyalty to them. As far as the Surs are concerned, they were assigned small *iqta's* with small ranks as Himmat Khan Sur seems to have held.

Bahlul's attitude towards the nobles—

A careful study of the medieval works reveals that Sultan Bahlul was a kind, just and intensely religious man by temperament. This is what we know on the basis of the account furnished by the later chroniclers who had access to the contemporary work, *Tarikh-i-Ibrahim Shahi*, by Maulana Mahmud Katwani.² The only extant earliest work, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, dealing with the history of the Afghan Kings—the Lodis and the Surs—also contains some interesting information, but this is mixed with legends and fables, that had developed about Bahlul after his death.³ Indeed,

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This will seem to have been based on hearsay. Because the Sur tribe was very small and poverty-stricken; it remained of no consequence till Sher Shah's rise to power. The Niazis were not relied upon due to their past hostility to the Lodi house. See *Firishta* p. 173.

This will seem to have been fabricated when the sudden rise of the Surs and the Niazis had dazzled the people under Sher Shah.

1. *Firishta* p. 173.
2. Nizam al-Din Bakhshi, the author of *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* and others refer to the works of Maulana Mahmud and Rizqullah Mushtaqi as their sources of information for the Afghan period. Maulana Mahmud, son of Ibrahim Katwani had written the history of the Lodi Sultans during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi (1517-1526), after whom the book was named *Tarikh-i-Ibrahim Shahi*. The author of the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* and the *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani* seem to have drawn the details about the military expeditions and conquests of Bahlul and Sikandar Lodi from the *Tarikh-i-Ibrahim Shahi*, as they are wanted in the *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*.
3. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*.

It may be pointed out that Bahlul and his followers were the descendants of those Afghans who had attained to important positions in the nobility of the Sultans of Delhi during the 14th century.

Mushtaqi recorded about the Sultan whatever he has gathered from hearsay. Consequently his account of Bahlul's reign is not only brief and laconic but a supernatural veneer also surrounds it. Nevertheless, the account of Mushtaqi should not be rejected as having nothing of historical significance, for the author was born during Sikandar Lodi's reign¹ and some of the anecdotes related to the time of Bahlul contain grains of truth. (As regards the details furnished in the work about Bahlul's temperament and his generous attitude towards people, they imply that the Sultan was always friendly towards 'ulama and his nobles. Both of them basked in the Sunshine of his generosity. That he showed this consideration to them because he was simple and modest in nature, and not for any political reason.²) Thus, glowing with pride upon the noble qualities of the Sultan, Mushtaqi states :

در مجلس بر تخت نه نشسته و مردم را قیام منع
فرموده همه بر فرشهای نفیس و بساط رنگین می نشستند
و هرکرا مسند عالی خطاب می کرد - روز بار عام برقا لیچچه
خود می نشست و بعضی را حکم بود که در خدمت با یستند -
آنها در مجلس نه می نشستند -

① He did not sit on the throne in the assembly and forbade the nobles to stand. All used to sit together on the fine carpets and the (Sultan) called every one Masnad-i-'ali (exalted lordship). He held the darbar daily and sat on the Carpet. Some of them (nobles) were ordered to stand. All did not sit in the assembly".

The same writer further says. ② "He tried his level best to please the nobles. If any one got angry with the Sultan, he

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Cf. *Rise of the Afghan Nobility Under the Lodis*, Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi, *Medieval India Quarterly*, Aligarh. 1961,

1. *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar*, Shaikh Abdul Haq. Also *Zubtal-Tawarikh*, Nural Haq, Rotograph of the Ms. (British Museum) f. 749.
2. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, 3f. 6b.
3. *Wia'qi-ati-Mushtaq* ff. 9a-b.

went to his house, unsheathed his sword and placed it before him, nay, he untied his turban and stood for apology."¹

It is really difficult to say with certainty as to how much of this Mushtaqi's statement is factual. For we know that Bahlul sat on the throne in 1451 after he had imprisoned Hamid Khan, the powerful wazir of the saiyid-Sultan.² We also know it for

certain that Sultan Bahlul was not the first Sultan to allow his high grandees to sit along with him in the *darbar* and to address them as *Masnad-i-'ali* (exalted lordship.) He rather adopted the ways of his predecessors in this respect. The

nobles sat in the *darbar* before the royal throne and they were addressed as *Majlis-i-'ali* or *Masnad-i-'ali*, since the times of Firuz Shah Tughlaq³. (However, it seems to be reasonable to

say that in view of the critical situation that Bahlul was called upon to face in north India, he followed a mild policy towards his nobles in order to keep them attached to himself.) For an

objective study of Bahlul's relations with the nobles and his theory of Kingship, we have both to recount and appraise the matter afresh.

Soon after his accession to the throne in 1451, Sultan Bahlul set to consolidate his power and authority in Delhi proper, and did not like at that time, to pick up a quarrel with the powerful nobles outside Delhi. But his victory over Sultan Mahmud Sharqi of Jaunpur in the battle of Narila (15 miles away from Delhi in the west) in 1452 A. D.⁴ made it possible to force the powerful and independent nobles in obedience. First he turned towards Ahmad Khan, the independent ruler of Mewat, who agreed to pay allegiance to him. The Sultan took away seven *parganas* from him and left the rest to Ahmad Khan Mewati as one of his nobles.

1. *Ibid.*, f. 9b.

2. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/293.

3. *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, Afif.

4. Both Rizqallah Mushtaqi and Nizam-al Din say that the old nobles of Delhi who disliked the Lodis, invited Sultan Mahmud Sharqi against Bahlul when the latter had left for Multan in order to reinstate Shaikh Yusuf there. Also *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*.

The Sultan also took Mnbarak Khan, the uncle of Ahmad Khan with him as the *vakil* of the latter.¹ From Mewat, the Sultan proceeded to the town of Baran where Dariya Khan Lodi met him and also offered seven *parganas* as his noble.² Isa Khan Turkbacha was also allowed to retain the territory of Kol when he accepted Bahlul's service. Similarly Mubariz Khan, the *hakim* of Saket and Rai Pratap were also left untouched in their territories on their assurance of loyalty and service to the Lodi Sultan. But strangely enough, Qutb Khan Afghan refused to accept the suzerainty of Bahlul and closed inside the fort of Rapri when the latter drew nearer to him. The reason being that he was the descendant of Malik Khattab Afghan, a respected noble of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq and Firuz Shah, and thus far superior to Islam Khan and Bahlul in descent. But the fort was captured and Khan Jahan Lodi persuaded Qutb Khan Afghan to pay allegiance to Sultan Bahlul.³ Sultan Bahlul reinstated him in Rapri and then turned to Etawah. The *hakim* of Etawah whose name has not been mentioned by any writer also paid allegiance to the Sultan.⁴

Though Sultan Bahlul adopted a liberal and kind attitude towards these nobles, they could not remain sincere to him later on. They were known for their double dealing and duplicity. Some of them used to change their allegiance frequently either in favour of Sultan Bahlul or the Sharqi Sultan. In consequence some of them were wiped out from the political scene. Those who remained attached to Sultan

1. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, vol. I, p. 164.

2. *Firishta*, p. 175. Dariya Khan Lodi was previously hostile to Sultan Bahlul and had allied with Sultan Mahmud Sharqi with 6,000 *sawars* to take part in the battle of Narila but he was soon won over to Bahlul's side by the efforts of Saiyid Shams al-Din, a faithful servant of Bahlul. Therefore, he caused dismay in the rank and file of the Sharqi army by leaving the battle-field when the Afghans were being hard-pressed.

3. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, pp. 146-7.

4. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 302

Bahlul, enjoyed their old *iqtas* and their successors also retained them till the fall of the Lodi Empire as will be discussed subsequently.)

Conflict with the Sharqi Sultans

The conflict between Sultan Bahlul and the powerful Sharqi Sultans of Jaunpur started on the issue of the throne of Delhi. The Sharqi Sultans regarded Bahlul as a usurper and advanced their claim to the throne of Delhi as the legitimate successors of Sultan Ala al-din Shah Saiyid, who had abdicated in favour of Bahlul.¹ The Sharqi Sultans were related to the ex-Saiyid ruler by matrimonial ties.² They were also far superior to Bahlul in their strength and glory and for their hold over the fertile territories of the East. But Bahlul with whom the end justified the means, always succeeded in treacherously gaining upper hand over the Sharqis.³

The success achieved by Sultan Bahlul in the battle of Narila made a profound impression upon the old independent nobles of northern India. It strengthened the Afghan position in Delhi on the one hand and broke down the morale of the Sharqi army to some extent on the other. In order to repair this loss, Sultan Mahmud Sharqi again rose to measure sword with Bahlul while the latter was subduing the independent chiefs. The rival armies faced each other in Etawah in the same year (1452-3 A.D.) but a peace treaty was soon concluded between the Sultans through the mediation of Qutb Khan Afghan and Rai Pratap who were with Bahlul as his new allies. In conformity with this treaty the territories which belonged to the Sharqi kingdom during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi (1402—40 A.D.) were to be ruled by Sultan Mahmud Sharqi while those which were the part of the Delhi Sultanate during Sultan Mubarak Shah Saiyid's reign, went to Sultan Bahlul. Bahlul also had to return

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi* f. 5a.

2. *T'arikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, p. 124.

3. See *The First Afghan Empire in India*, pp. 64-7 for the account of the battle.

seven war elephants captured in the Narila battle.¹

The old nobles of the Saiyid period remained loyal to Sultan Bahlul till 1458 A.D. Their double dealing started from the same year when Rai Pratap repudiated his allegiance to Sultan Bahlul in favour of Sultan Muhammad Shah Sharqi, the successor of Sultan Mahmud, because the latter appeared far superior to the former in power and resources.² This year the battle took place near Rapri and continued for several days. But all of a sudden the circumstances took a turn in favour of Sultan Bahlul. Prince Husain Khan Sharqi contrived to detach himself with 30,000 *sawars* and went straight to Qanauj where the majority of the Sharqi nobles accepted him their king against Muhammad Shah who had lost their confidence for his violent nature. In the meantime the Afghans succeeded in arresting Prince Jalal Khan, the younger brother of the Sharqi Sultan whom Bahlul kept as a hostage for Qutb Khan Lodi, son of Islam Khan, who was in the Sharqi prison for seven months.³

Now Sultan Muhammad Shah was faced with a critical situation because it was beyond his power to face Bahlul with a small number of the *sawars*. However, he also retreated to Qanauj letting the followers of Bahlul pursue and plunder his camp equipment and stores.⁴ He was murdered in Qanauj by his own men in 1458 A.D. The new

1. *Tabaqat-i-Akburi* i/302-3.

2. *Ta'rikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, p. 150.

3. Nizam al-Din and after him other writers say that Qutb Khan Lodi remained in the *Sharqi* prison for seven years but Firishta differs from them. He says that Qutb Khan underwent imprisonment for seven months only. Firishta's statement is correct because Qutb Khan Lodi was set free soon after the accession of Sultan Husian Shah and the reign of Sultan Muhammad Shah did not last for more than seven months. Qutb Khan Lodi was made prisoner by the Sharqis in 1453 A. D. near Shamsabad. *Firishta*, p. 176. Dr. A. B. Pandey also says that Qutb Khan Lodi remained in the Sharqi prison for seven years. *The first Afghan Empire in India* p. 73.

4. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/305.

Sultan of Jaunpur, Husain Shah came to terms with Bahlul by concluding a peace-treaty according to which the prisoners, Qutb Khan Lodi and Jalal Khan Sharqi were exchanged and peace was made for four years.¹

Thereafter Qutb Khan Afghan persuaded Rai Pratap to rejoin Sultan Bahlul and took him to the royal presence. In 1463 A.D. Bir Singh, the son of Rai Pratap, also entered the service of Sultan Bahlul. But Dariya Khan Lodi, who had grievance against Rai Pratap, for the latter had seized from the former a flag and drum in 1453 A.D., the flag and the drum being the sign of greatness, conspired against the person of Bir Singh. He also consulted Qutb Khan Afghan, a cunning old Indian noble, who agreed with him and Bir Singh was murdered in consequence. After that it was also Qutb Khan Afghan who resented to the murder and deserted to Sultan Husain Sharqi taking Rai Pratap and Mubariz Khan Behta with him (in 1466 A.D.) Their desertion weakened the position of Sultan Bahlul so much so that he at once left Shamsabad for Delhi.²

1. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/306.

2. *ibid.* pp. 306-7

Dr. A. B. Pandey says on the authority of the *Ta'rik-i-Khan-i-Juhani*: "In order to secure local Hindu support in a full measure and to conciliate Raja Pratap who had lately been detached from the Sharqi side; Bahlul gave the standard and kettle-drums seized from Dariya Khan Lodi to Rai Bir Singh, son of Raja Pratap." *The First Afghan Empire*, p. 76.

But Ni'matallah's statement cannot be accepted for certain reasons. First, Dariya Khan Lodi never seems to have displeased Sultan Bahlul after he had paid allegiance to him in Baran in 1452 A. D. Secondly Nizam al-Din says,

قبل ازین دای پرتاپ یک نیزه که در آن دو زنگار به سوزانده علم
سردادی میبوده است و یک نقاره از دریا خان بزور گرفته بود -
دریا خان از دوی انتقام بپرسد که پسر او را با استصواب قطب
خان بقتل رسانید -

Sometime before, Rai Pratap seized a standard, a sign of greatness in those days, and a drum from Dariya Khan by force. Dariya Khan

But this time also the battle was stopped after minor skirmishes near Chandwar and peace was restored for three years through the mediation of the nobles. Both the Sultans agreed to suspend hostilities for three years. During this period Sultan Bahlul busied himself in strengthening his position. Khan Jahan Lodj succeeded in rewinning Ahmad Khan Mewati to Sultan Bahlul¹. Since then Ahmad Khan Mewati remained loyal to the Lodi Sultan for ever. Rustam Khan Turkbacha also seems to have been won over again to Bahlul at this time because his descendants continued to retain their ancestral *iqta* till the fall of the Lodi Empire in 1526 A. D.

Between the years 1369 A. D. and 1478 A. D. two undecisive battles of Bahtwara and Saikhra (Etawah district) took place between the rival Sultans.¹ But the year 1478 was a turning point in the history of Bahlul. It was during this year that the imbecile king, Sultan Ala al-Din Shah (Saiyid) breathed his last in Badaun. On his death Sultan Husain Sharqi, his son-in-law, came to Badaun with the pretension of offering condolence but his real motive was the occupation of the territory of Badaun. Having occupied Badaun, he advanced on Delhi and captured Tatar Khan Lodi, son of Dariya Khan Lodi in Sambhal on his way.² Upon these news Sultan Bahlul also came out of Delhi and faced the enemy. After some skirmishes in which the Sharqi army had the advantage for its large number, Sultan Bahlul had to conclude a humiliating peace treaty according to which he gave up all his territories beyond the Ganges and agreed to rule in Delhi as the vassal of the Sharqi Sultan. Thereafter Sultan Husain retreated to Jaunpur in arrogance without having any fear of the surprise attack by the Afghans. Bahlul got his opportunity and fell on the careless retreating army. The Afghans succeeded in seizing the baggage and treasures with forty high nobles of the enemy

(Continued from the previous page)

killed Bir Singh, his son, in consultation with Qutb Khan to avenge him. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/307.

1. *Badauni*, p. 309.

among whom Qutlugh Khan, the learned *wazir* and Budha *nalb-t-arz* were also included. Most of the followers of Sultan Husain were put to the sword and the Sharqi Sultan himself was hotly pursued upto Rapri.¹ This victory achieved by the Lodi Sultan broke down the morale of the Sharqi army. After it Bahlul occupied many places of the Sharqi kingdom and finally drove away Sultan Husain Sharqi from Jaunpur in 1486 A.D.²

With the expulsion of Sultan Husain from Jaunpur, Qutb Khan Afghan, Rai Pratap and Mir Mubariz Khan Behta disappeared from the political scene.

The position of the old nobles towards the closing years of Bahlul's Reign

(Towards the closing years of Sultan Bahlul's reign, many nobles of the old houses appear to have survived the vicissitudes of time and retained their ancestral *iqtas* and positions of importance. Ahmad Khan Mewati held *Khitta-i-Mewat* while Rustam Khan Turkbacha of Kol, Iqbal Khan of Bari,³ and Mubarak Khan of Saket also seem to have retained their old positions in their respective territories, for their descendants are often mentioned in the accounts of the successors of Sultan Bahlul. We also come across a high noble of the status of *malik*, named Malik Firuz Turk. His *iqta* and office are not referred to by the chronicler, though he was held in high esteem by the Sultan for his learning and honesty.⁴ Besides *Masnad-i-ali* Khawwas Khan of Machhiwara,¹ the father of famous Mian Bhua, Khwaja Asghar,² the Saiyid and Kambo³ nobles who are mentioned in the account of the early years of Sultan Sikandar's reign, also seem to have come of the old families of the

1. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/308-10.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 311. *Ta'rikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, pp. 165-6
Also *The First Afghan Empire in India*, pp. 82-6

3. Iqbal Khan of Bari entered Sultan Bahlul's service in 1479-80 A. D. The Sultan allowed him to retain the town of Bari with its dependencies. a *Tarikh-i-Khan-i Jahani*, p. 167

4. *Zubdt al-Tawarikh*, p. 48a.

preceding period. Because none of them is stated to have been raised by Sultan Sikandar to high dignity.

Amongst the Hindu chiefs whom we find in prominence during the period under review were Rai Dudu, Rai Sakit Singh, son of Rai Tilokchand, the Rai of Dholpur and Rai Mansingh of Gwalior. The last two Rais were only the vassals of Bahlul who were expected to pay annual tributes and render some military support whenever asked, while the former were regarded and treated as the nobles under obligation to remain in the royal attendance and fight for him in the battles.

In 1479 A.D. the Sultan assigned a few *parganas* to Rai Dudu in the vilayet of Etawah while the charge of the whole unit with the Etawah fort was entrusted to Ibrahim Khan, son of *Masnad-i-ali* Mubarak Khan Nuhanī. Previously, the fort of Etawah was also held by Rai Dudu but Bahlul had seized it from the Sharqi nobles who had captured it from the Rai.⁵ But, as soon as Bahlul left Etawah to settle his affairs with Sultan Husain Sharqi finally, Rai Sakit Singh, son of Dudu, occupied Etawah. In 1488 A.D. the Sultan again came to Etawah and displaced Rai Sakit Singh.⁴ Rai Tilok Chand of Baksar deserted Sultan Husain Sharqi in 1480 A.D. and entered the service of Sultan Bahlul.⁶

In short, Sultan Bahlul had to handle the situation very tactfully. The Afghan as well as non-Afghan nobles of the old houses, who had large *iqtas* in north India, could not willingly be reconciled to the idea of an all-powerful king. His own Afghan followers were also made conscious of the value of their power by the treacherous activities and

1, 2. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/322.

3. It is in dispute as to whether the Kambos were Indian converts or came from abroad. But they were cultured people and some of them emerged as scholars of high learning and calibre during the later half of the 15th century.

4. *Ta'rikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, vol. I, p. 163.

5. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*.

6. Baksar is situated on the left bank of the river Ganges, 34 miles southeast of the Unao city. *Firishta*, p. 178.

manipulations of Bahlul to which he resorted in order to get rid of his powerful rivals.¹

As a result of this policy of the Sultan, nobles of different racial stock took interest in the safety of the Lodi Empire as their own. Bahlul was so shrewd that he created in the mind of the Afghan nobles a sense of belonging to a brotherhood (*biradari*) instead of different tribes.² This sense also made them self-sacrificing for the Sultan. They considered his Empire a source of prestige and glory for them. Even the tribal chiefs of Roh came to its rescue when the emergency arose and returned after the need of their support was over.

What kept the Afghan nobles within bonds was the personality and the authority of the Sultan. As the Afghan

1. At the time of Hamid Khan's arrest by treacherous means, the Afghans could not help speaking ill of Bahlul only to enter Hamid Khan's palace and shake off his doubts of their duplicity. They said to the gate-keepers :

ددېلو (سلطان بهلول) چه کس باشد که خود اندرون در
آید، ما بیرون با شیم ما چاکر او نیستیم بلکه نوکر حمید
خانیم و توهم نوکر حمید خان -

"who is Ballu (Sultan Bahlul) to enter the palace while we remain outside? We are not his servants but of Hamid Khan in whose service you are also."

On knowing it, Hamid Khan allowed them to enter the palace and was thus arrested. See *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 4a-6b.

Similarly, Bahlul succeeded in liquidating the Sharqi power by playing fraud and stratagems on Sharqi Sultans in the battles.

2. Sultan Sikandar is reported to have gone to the camps of the high Afghan nobles and said to them at the time of his battle against Sultan Husain Sharqi and the rebel zamindars in 1494 A.D. that they served his father out of the spirit of belonging to the same *biradari* and assured them of his good treatment to raise their morale.

ددر داتره هر یکی رفت و گفت شمارا درکار سلطان بهلول
شاه مرحوم آنچه حق برادرې بود کردید مارا اولین کاره‌میں
است در کوشش تقصیر نکند -

nobles belonged to different tribes and were jealous of one another's power and resources, the only authority to weld these heterogeneous elements into an organized and harmonious whole was the Sultan. This heterogeneity among the different Afghan nobles also obliged them to strive for winning the favour of the Sultan by their obedience and loyalty. All the nobles, Lodis—Yusuf Khail and Shahu Khail—, Nuhanis and Sarwanis served the Empire with devotion and loyalty. Had Sultan Bahlul not showed regard to the feelings of his nobles, he would not have been able to strengthen and consolidate his authority in north India.

There was really no other way out left to him in the given conditions. As soon as the crisis was over after the final expulsion of Sultan Husain Sharqi from Jaunpur, the Sultan asserted his authority in every matter. The destruction of Tatar Khan Yusuf Khail took place after his position was consolidated in all the territories upto Jaunpur. Moreover, the transfer of *Masnad-i-ali* Mubarak Khan Nuhani from the vilayet of Jaunpur and the appointment of Prince Barbak Shah in stead in 1479-80 A.D. support our point.¹ Similarly, the *sarkars* of Kalpi and Lucknow were entrusted to the charge of Prince Azam Humayun Lodi, the *sarkar* of Awadh to *Masnad-i-ali* Mian Muhammad Farmuli, the nephew of the Sultan, and the large *iqta* of Raqri to Prince Alam Khan as already stated. The treatment meted out to the Niazi and the Sur Afghans also deserves mention. The Niazi and the Sur Afghans could not enjoy high status like other immigrants of Roh, they served either under the high nobles, or as petty *amirs* and *sawars* in the Sultan's personal army, called *Khasa Khail*. The high Afghan nobles whom the Sultan honoured with large *iqtas* and important administrative posts were the relations of the Sultan or of the old servants.

Though Sultan Bahlul's policy seems to have been somewhat weak and without imagination, he could not act otherwise. It is to his credit that he paved the way for the expansion of

1. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, p. 166.

the Lodi Empire and establishment of an autocratic rule under Sultan Skandar. Sultan Firuz Shah was the first king who not only allowed his high grandees to sit before the royal throne¹ but also left them free in their *iqtas*, with the result that they became so disrespectful towards the crown after his death that they tossed it like a shuttlecock and carved out independent principalities for themselves.¹

* As Sultan Bahlul had succeeded in consolidating the interests of his dynasty, no nobles could think of claiming the throne for himself even after his death near Jalali in 1488 A.D. On his death, the powerful nobles were divided into groups to support different princes for the throne of Bahlul. The members of every group wanted to raise the Prince to sovereignty from whom they expected greater favour and benefit. Isa Khan Lodi, the *muqta* of Patiali, Kampil and Bhogaon conspired with some other Afghan nobles to set Prince Nizam Khan aside in favour of Azam Humayun, son of Prince Bayazid, the eldest son of Bahlul who was killed by one of his servants in the life-time of his father. They summoned Prince Nizam Khan from Delhi on behalf of the Sultan while the latter was on his death-bed. Fortunately, Khan-i Azam Umar Khan Sarwani, the *Wazir* at that time, informed the Prince about the conspiracy and thus saved him from falling into their trap.² Having been failed in their designs, the Afghan nobles under the leadership of Isa Khan Lodi held a council to which all the important persons were invited to settle the issue of succession. Zaiband, the mother of Prince Nizam Khan, also came and said to the nobles from behind the curtain:

دردم لیاقت بادشاهی دارد و با شما ساوک نیگو خواهد
نمود³ -

1. 'Afif, pp. 280-1.

2. *The Life and Times of Daulat Khan Lodi*; I. H. Siddiqi, *The proceedings of the All India History Congress*, 1963.

3. *Firishta*, p. 178.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 179.

"My son deserves kingship and he would treat you well."
Isa Khan Lodi, thereupon, used abusive language against her :

پسر دستختر زر گر بادشاهی را نشاید -

"The son of the daughter of a gold-smith is not fit for kingship." It displeased Khan Khanan Farmuli who asked Isa Khan to be respectful towards the widow of the Sultan. Isa Khan, a rash Afghan, scolded him also for interfering with the relations of the Sultan while he was only a servant. The Khan Khanan also replied to him in harsh words:

من نوکر پادشاه سکندرم نه نوکر دیگرے -

"I am the servant of Sultan Sikandar, and not of any body else." Khan Jahan Lodi also decided to support the cause of Prince Nizam Khan. Being powerful nobles they frustrated the plan of Isa Khan Lodi. They took away the dead body of the Sultan to Jalali where they invited Prince Nizam Khan and enthroned him with the title of Sultan Sikandar Shah on 17th July, 1488 A.D.¹

1. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, pp: 314-15.

Here it is noteworthy that the pure Afghan blood ceased to carry weight in the matter of succession after the death of Islam Khan Lodi. Islam Khan Lodi nominated Bahlul to succeed to his *iqtā* in preference to his own son; Qutb Khan, who was born of a Hindu mother—hence he was thought unfit. But the Afghans were divided after the death of Islam Khan Lodi. Some of them supported Qutb Khan Lodi while others remained with Bahlul. The supporters of Qutb Khan Lodi were defeated and then forced to join Bahlul.

Firishta, p. 172.

CHAPTER II

DESPOTISM OF THE SUCCESSORS OF BAHULUL LODI

The successors of Bahlul, Sultan Sikandar and Sultan Ibrahim, realized that the monarchical traditions of the early Sultans of India could best serve the political and cultural needs of their Sultanate. They made a full-scale retreat from Bahlul's conciliatory policy towards the high nobles and thus raised themselves head and shoulder above them. Their theories of kingship were conditioned by their ambitions and by the requirements of the age as well. Inspired by high ideals they emphasized the dignified part of kingship that all should bask under the sunshine of their benevolence irrespective of birth and creed.

Sultan Sikandar (1489-1517), as a military general and statesman, displayed both an insight and ability which raised him far above his contemporaries. The clarity with which he judged his measures towards his problems paved the way for the consolidation of his authority and the expansion of his empire. He tempered his despotism with generosity and cemented political allegiance with both psychological stimulants and deterrents.

In the beginning the Sultan had to face a political dilemma. There were two more rivals to the throne of Bahlul who had their supporters in the nobility. But he moved cautiously and dealt with the situation tactfully. The power of Prince Azam Humayun was weakened by the subjugation of Prince Alam Khan and Isa Khan Lodi, who held the *iqtas* of Rapri and Patiali respectively.¹

¹ First Prince Alam fled from Rapri to Patiali but after a few months

The *iqta* of Rapri was assigned to Khan Khanan Nuhani¹ and of Patiali to Rai Ganesh, who had just entered Sikandar's service by deserting Barbak Shah.²

The initial victories of the Sultan weakened the position of his rivals and demoralized their supporters. The destruction of Isa Khan Lodi struck an annihilating blow at Prince Azam Humayun, who was left all alone with his contingent in the *sarkars* of Lucknow and Kalpi. The desertion of Rai Ganesh also affected the position of Barbak Shah. As Sikandar's position became safe in the region comprising modern western U.P., he could turn towards Jaunpur.

Barbak Shah was not willing to accept the overlordship of Sikandar and came out to face him with all determination. A fierce battle was fought between the rival armies near Qanauj. But the capture of Mubarak Khan Nuhani, whom Sultan Sikandar won over to his side soon afterwards,³ demoralized

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agreed to accept Sikandar's suzerainty and thus got the charge of the *sarkar* of Etawah. In Etawah he assumed an air of independence and fled away to Gujrat. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/315; *Badauni*, i/314; *Mirat-i-Sikandari*, 163.

Though Isa Khan Lodi was pardoned by the Sultan, he died of his wounds received in the battle against the Sultan. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/315.

1. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, i/172.

2. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/314.

Firishta writes Rai Gilan instead of Rai Ganesh who had deserted Barbak Shah and to whom Sultan Sikandar gave the *iqta* of Patiali. Firishta, p. 180.

3. Firishta says that it was Mian Muhammad Farmuli, the *muqta* of Awadh, whose capture caused the defeat of Barbak Shah. But Nizam al-Din and Badauni say that it was Mubarak Khan Nuhani, who held the *villayet* of Kara and Manikpur. Muhammad Kabir, the authour *Afsana-i-Shahan*, though misleading in most of the details, here gives some additional information about this incident. He says that on the death of Bahlul, Mubarak Khan Nuhani promised whole-hearted support to Barbak Shah against his rivals. But his sons, Nasir Khan and Dariya Khan Nuhani remained with Sultan Sikandar. They made their father prisoner when the battle was being fought, and the Sultan won him over to his side by

Barbak Shah, who fled to Badaun where he had to surrender.

Sultan Sikandar did not like to wreck vengeance upon his brother. He entrusted him with the charge of Jaunpur, while its dependencies were assigned to other trusted nobles as their maintenance *iqtas*. Moreover, some of the nobles were left with him to have watch on his activities.¹ From Jaunpur the Sultan proceeded to Kalpi where he replaced Prince Azam Humayun by Mahmud Khan Lodi.² The *sarkar* of Lucknow seems to have been assigned to Mubarak Khan Yusuf Khail.³ As regards the rebel Sultan Ashraf, the son and successor of Ahmad Khan Jilwani, who had assumed independence, he was also repalced by KhanKhanan Farmuli.⁴

The last military operations for the subjugation of the rebels were launched against the Rajput *zamindars* of the eastern territories. These *zamindars* were deeply attached to the Sharqi Sultans and still wanted to serve the cause of Sultan Husain Sharqi. On the instigation of Sultan Husain Sharqi, they rose in rebellion and fomented trouble every where. They gathered 100,000 *sawars* and also invited Sultan Husain Sharqi, who was in Bihar. Being terrified, Barbak Shah fled to *masnad-i-ali* Muhammad Khan Farmuli in Awadh, while Mubarak Khan Nuhani was made prisoner in Kara. His younger brother, Sher Khan Nuhani was killed by the rebels. The Sultan received these distressing news while playing *chaugan*. He ordered his nobles to rush to Jaunpur at once.

The rebel *zamindars*, Sultan Husain Sharqi and Raja Bahid of Bhatta, had to pay heavy price of their rebellions both in life and territories. The *zamindars* were destroyed, the Raja of Bhatta met his death as a result of pursuit by the Afghan

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showing regard for his old age.

Afsana-i-Shahun, ff. 23b-24b; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/316; Badauni, i/314; *Flirishta*, p. 180.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

2. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, i/173.

3. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/314.

4. *Ibid.*, i/316-7.

king, and his successors had to face the severe attacks of Azam Humayun Sarwani, who was appointed the *muqta* of the vilayet of Kara and Manikpur after the death of Mubarak Khan Nuhani.¹ They lost much of their territory² and appear to have purchased peace when their existence was threatened. Sultan Husain Sharqi was driven away from Bihar³ also, and Barbak Shah was imprisoned because he had lost the confidence of Sultan Sikandar for his failure in subduing the malcontents in Jaunpur.⁴ Moreover, the Rai of Tirhut also acknowledged Sikandar's suzerainty.⁵

6) All the aforesaid campaigns, which resulted mostly in the replacement of the old nobles—Afghan as well as non-Afghan—indicate that the principle of hereditary succession was no consideration in the matter of appointments. It also upheld that the Sultan's confidence in a noble was the essential qualification for his continuation in the state service. The nobles could retain their *iqtas* or their sons could succeed to them only as a favour from the Sultan.

Once the powerful and sensitive nobles were subdued, others were completely subservient to the king. The king also infused a fresh life in them by his good treatment. He handled a critical situation with tact and vigour.

On the submission of the nobles, he sat on the throne in an open *darbar* where the nobles had to show all respect to the throne and obey his orders.⁶ Even in his absence his *farmans* were received with great respect and deference. The *amir* to whom the *farman* was sent had to go six miles to receive it, and put it on his head from a raised ground prepared for

1. *Tabaqat-i-i Akbari*, i/319.

2. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 36b-37a.

Mubarak Khan Nuhani was released by Raja Bahid when Sultan Sikandar proceeded against the rebels. Later on he died a natural death. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, i/207.

3. *Waqiat-Mushtaqi*, f. 11b. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/319.

4. Cf. *The First Afghan Empire*, p. 124.

5. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/319-320.

6. *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, pp. 49-50.

this purpose. Then all those concerned with it had to listen to it standing¹. The old nobles, who expected Sultan Bahlul to flatter them, began to bow and prostrate before the Sultan in order to please him and maintain their privileged position².

A little haste or rashness on the part of the Sultan might have caused chaos and anarchy in the Empire. He crushed the power of the hostile nobles as well as those whose power he feared. In the words of Mushtaqi: "Anyone who turned from the path of obedience, he (the Sultan) either got his head severed off the body or expelled him from the Empire."³

The Sultan expelled Sultan Asharf, son of Ahmad Khan Jilwani for his assumption of sovereignty. He also exiled the twenty-two important nobles who had hatched a conspiracy against his life in Jaunpur in 1499 A.D.⁴ The most important among the malcontents were Khan 'Azam Said Khan Sarwani and Haibat Khan Sarwani, son of Khan 'Azam Umar Khan Sarwani, Tatar Khan Farmuli, the younger brother of *masnad-i-ali* Muhammad Farmuli Kalapahar, Muhammad Khan Lodi, Babu Khan Sarwani and Rai Ganesh⁵. They first sought refuge with Raja Man Singh of Gwalior but later on they went to Gujrat, for the Raja was forced by the Sultan to come to terms. Similarly, Jalal Khan Lodi, who succeeded his father as the *muqta* of Kalpi in 1506 A.D. was thrown into prison for his carelessness in capturing the fort of Narore. As he did not exert himself properly, the siege had prolonged for a whole year. On his imprisonment in 1508 A.D. the other

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 9a; *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 38.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-45; *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 12b.

3. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 8a-b.

4. It seems that the Sultan did not order their execution because they were high nobles and had large contingents to defy him. He expelled them in groups at different times. See *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 323; *Lataif-i-Quddusi*, p. 41.

5. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, p. 193, for the involvement of Babu Khan Sarwani and Rai Ganesh in the Jaunpur conspiracy. Even before the conspiracy was hatched in 1495, the Sultan had set up an armed guard around his palace for his safety.

nobles became alert and captured the fort soon after.¹

The Sultan also appears to have maltreated his nobles on the instigation of his favourites who rallied round his court and flattered him. Sometimes the younger brothers intrigued against their elder brothers in order to supersede them in their positions. They liked to win the royal favour by all the means available. In 1494 A.D. Mahabat Khan Lodi was appointed the *maqta* of Bihar, but soon afterwards he was replaced by Dariya Khan Nuhani.² In 1509 A.D. Khizr Khan, son of Prince Alam Khan, and Said Khan, son of Mubarak Khan Yusuf Khail, succeeded in poisoning the ears of the Sultan against their elder brothers, who held the charge of the *sarkars* of Etawah and Lucknow respectively. Consequently, *masnad-i-ali* Bhikkhan Khan was replaced by Khizr Khan Lodi and Ahmad Khan Lodi by Said Khan in their respective *sarkars*.³ This was not all. Ahmad Khan (Yusuf Khail) Lodi was charged with heresy due to the catholicity of his views and friendship with the Hindu saints. He was thrown into prison⁴. At the same time the *iqta* of Khwaja Muhammad Imad Farmuli was also transferred from him to his younger brother, Khwaja Muhammad.⁵ The other non-Afghan nobles, who displeased the Sultan, were also punished. In 1507, Mujahid Khan, who was reported to have taken bribe from the Raja of Tahiagra (Otnager in the chronicles) at the time of siege, was arrested by his subordinates

1. Both Nizam-al-Din and Nimat Allah say that after much thinking the Sultan destroyed Jalal Khan, for he was alarmed by the number of his troops. But it does not seem to be correct. No noble liked to maintain larger contingent than he was required to have. Jalal Khan paraded his well-maintained army before the Sultan in order to win his favour. The Sultan did not take any step for a year but he got him arrested when he found him reckless in conquering the fort. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, pp. 328-29.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 319.

3. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 332.

4. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, p. 207.

5. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 332.

at the royal order. After that, the fort of Dholpur was assigned to Malik Taj al-Din Kambo.¹ In 1509, *masnad-i ali* Mian Husain Farmuli, the famous *muqta* of Saran and Champaran, also fell victim to the wrath of the Sultan. Haji Sarang Khan was sent to Saran to win over his men to his side and then make his arrest. But the latter sensed the treacherous role of Sarang Khan and fled away to Beggal.² In 1510 A.D. Mian Sulaiman Farmuli, son of Khan Khana Farmuli, was ordered to proceed towards Tahingra in order to help Husain Khan (a Hindu convert), who held the territory of Shivpur, but he refused to go there. Having been annoyed by his disobedience, the Sultan deprived him of his high position and ordered him to be away from the royal camp with all his beggare before the next morning as the soldiers were permitted to plunder his property if he was late. He was assigned only the *pargana* of Indri for his maintenance.³

P In short, Sultan Sikandar was the first Afghan king who behaved like an all-powerful monarch and demanded complete obedience as well as unwavering loyalty from his nobles. Since the power and authority of the Sultan was fully consolidated in northern India, he could not tolerate the faults of his nobles like his father. His tactfulness, humanism and generosity, high sense of purpose and personal magnetism,⁴ coupled with his unfailing success in the battlefield, made the nobility completely loyal and subservient to the sovereign and also suppressed its sentiments of equality with the Sultan.

P Sultan Sikandar is also credited with the establishment of a sound administrative machinery. He introduced the practice of audit in order to check the accounts of the *muqtas*.⁵ Mubarak Khan Lodi (Tugi Khail), the *muqta* of Jaunpur, was the first man whose accounts came under royal scrutiny. The high nobles

1. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, p. 201.

2. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 333.

3. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 335.

4. *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 38.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

terceded on his behalf but it was of no avail.¹ He lost his position in consequence. Similarly, Khwaja Asghar, a non-Afghan *muqta* of Delhi, was thrown into prison for corruption, and Khawwas Khan, the *muqta* of Machchiwara (later Sultan Sikandar's *Wazir*) was assigned the charge of Delhi.² He was much interested in the welfare of his people and no officer could maltreat them. He kept himself informed of the conditions of the people through the spies in all parts. Charity houses were opened where needy people got financial assistance.³ Scholars and poets were patronized and educational institutions were granted financial aid throughout the Sultanate. His interest in learning and education earned him an everlasting fame.⁴ He administered justice and organized an efficient judicial system which operated under his own supervision. Nobody was immune to law: a common man could approach the royal court, the Supreme Court of appeal, even against a high grandee, if his grievance was not redressed in the lower courts.⁵

Furthermore, the Sultan again revived the espionage system which had long ceased to exist. He kept himself informed of the activities of the nobles through his active spies. As a result the nobles feared to discuss the political matter among themselves, lest the Sultan should be displeased.⁶ Besides, the nobles had to keep their *vakils* at the court through whom they received the royal orders and were informed of the

Tabaqat-i-Akbari, p. 321; *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, p. 187.

Tabaqat-i-Akbari, p. 312.

Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi, f. 8b; *Tarikh-i-Daudi* pp. 38, 50.

Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi, ff. 8a, 66b.

Ibid., ff. 13b, 14a, 15b, 16a.

Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi, f. 15a.

Once *masnad-i 'ali* Bhikkhan Khan Lodi, son of Prince Alam Khan Lodi, who was entrusted with the charge of the *sarkar* of Etawah after his father's flight to Gujarat, was sleeping on the roof of his house in Agra; when all of a sudden it began to rain and he had to take his cot inside the room himself, because there was no slave available at the spot. In the morning the Sultan told it to his nobles in the presence of Bhikkhan Khan Lodi.

developments at the centre.¹

However, the serious interest evinced by the Sultan in the establishment of sound administrative system and impartial justice brought about peace and prosperity to people. Besides the progress in art and learning, the cost of living was so cheap that every person could live comfortably. Mushtaqi says that food grains, cloth, horses, sheep, gold and silver which people require for a comfortable life were available in plenty and at cheap rates. Even the poor could possess all. The same writer, while closing the account of his reign, bursts out in his praise and copies the verses of Amir Khusrau to show the general prosperity and happiness that marked his reign.²

Notwithstanding the facts discussed above, one should not forget that the expansion of the Lodi Empire gave birth to the powerful governors (*muqtas*) of the frontier vilayets who had 30,000 and 45,000 *sawars* with a good number of war elephants in their service. Though the Sultan also posted other loyal nobles in the distant vilayets to work under the supreme *muqtas*, they could not check their powerful superiors by their comparatively small contingents.³ Therefore, when they rose in rebellion, it was difficult for Sultan Ibrahim to suppress them easily.

The accession of Sultan Ibrahim to the Lodi throne was again marked by a conflict between the nobility and the crown.

1. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 26a-b.
2. Here is given the English translation of the persian verses. "What a wonderful age it is; people are prosperous; there is festival and marrying in every house. People do not cherish feelings of hatred against one another, nor does anybody entertain the thought of mischiefs-marking in dream, the Muslim are dominant, the Hindus obedient; the very name of the Mughal is not heard of. The king, as possessing divine knowledge is highly eminent, like a mountain which has the grandeur of the rock externally (and the beauty of diamond internally).
He is a king like Zulqarnain (Alexendar, the Great).
Therefore the title of (Sultan) Sikandar was appropriate to him."
3. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 43a-b

Unlike his father, the new Sultan had to deal with the old powerful nobles holding extensive vilayet and *sarkars*. The previous Sultan succeeded in destroying his rivals, the princes of royal blood because the majority of the nobles had supported him in expectation of large *iqtas*, high ranks and positions. Now these nobles tried to safeguard their interest against the favourites of the new Sultan. The prince of the blood, especially the heir-apparent, became the centre of attraction for the careerists throughout the medieval period. Sultan Ibrahim also had his old followers and officers, who might have gathered around him during the lifetime of his father. The only way to avoid the conflict was the further expansion of the empire so that the old nobles could be kept engaged in conquests and the new aspirants could get *iqtas* and ranks. The conquest of Gwalior is indicative of the fact that Sultan Ibrahim followed this policy. But the role of the nobles in the civil war between the Sultan and Prince Jalal Khan made the former doubtful about the loyalty of his father's nobles. The Sultan either threw his nobles in prison or had them murdered whenever they showed negligence in carrying out his orders. It sharpened the conflict between the crown and the nobility, and rebellions broke out in consequence. There was also caused internal conflict by the new nobles of the previous reign.

Internal conflict within the nobility :

The internal conflict within the nobility has been a common feature of the history of medieval India. It was witnessed during the reigns of the successors of Iltutmish, Khaljis, Tughluqs, Saiyids and the Lodis. But it never assumed such a serious proportion as it did during the reigns of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq and Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. The former had to witness the dismemberment of his empire as a result of widespread rebellion, whereas the latter faced not only the rebellion, but also (witnessed the fall of the Lodi Empire, apparently as a result of it) Let us discuss the causes and effect of this conflict during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim.

The internal conflict between the nobles and the king took place just after the death of Sultan Sikandar. It was caused by

the ambitions of certain selfish nobles, who wanted to benefit by dividing sovereignty between the Sultan and Prince Jalal Khan, the *muqta* of Kalpi. By the division of sovereignty they aimed at weakening the central power and getting upper hand over the rival Sultans.

Consequently they decided that Sultan Ibrahim would rule over the territories west to the river Ganges and Prince Jalal Khan over the eastern territories.¹ The Sultan accepted the division of sovereignty half heartedly for the time being. As a matter of fact, he was not prepared to let it produce evil results. He was an ambitious Sultan and the Empire bequeathed to him by his father was not large enough to satisfy him.

As Khan Khanan Nuhani came from his *iqta* of Rapri to pay respect to the new master, the Sultan refused to accept the division of the empire on his advice.² The support of a high and respected noble like Khan Khanan against his enemies enabled him to put aside his rival. First he liked to persuade him through Haibat Khan *Gurgandaz* (wolf killer), who was known for his wit and pleasing manners, to accept his suzerainty. But the Prince refused to give up his claim to sovereignty. Thereupon, the Sultan sent Shaikhzada Muhammad, son of Shaikh Said Farmuli, Malik Ismail Jilwani and Qazi Mujahid al-Din Hajib to frighten him into submission, but in vain.³ Now a critical situation arose for the nobles to show their loyalty to one of the contending parties, as upon it depended their future prospects.

Disappointed about peaceful reconciliation, Sultan Ibrahim got a jewelled throne prepared for his *Diwan Khana* and held a glorious *darbar* on a certain Friday in 1517 A.D. On this occasion he showed favours to all the nobles of the empire by giving them jewelled-daggers, horses, elephants, new ranks, titles and *iqtas* according to their status.⁴ As Sultan Ibrahim appeared

1. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 341.

2. *Tarikh-i-Khan i-Jahani*, p. 232.

3. *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, p. 342; *Zubdt al-Tawarikh*, f. 75a.

4. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, p. 233.

More powerful than his rival, the majority of the nobles rallied round the rising star; only those who could not think reconciliation with him possible either for their long association with Jalal Khan or complicity in the division of sovereignty, remained hostile to him. — In such circumstances the Prince preferred to leave Jaunpur for Kalpi where his position was more stable for his good relations with the local *zamindars*.¹ Assured of the support of the *zamindars*, he declared himself Sultan and turned towards *Masnad-i-'ali* Azam Humayun Sarwani who was at that time busy with the siege of Kalinjar at the head of a large army. As his son, Fath Khan was the *wazir* of Jalal Khan, he also joined him by raising the siege.² Then they proceeded towards Lucknow with their combined forces. Said Khan Yusuf Khail the *muqta* of the *sarkar* of Lucknow, failed in holding out against them and left the city to the rebels.³

The occupation of the territories upto Lucknow by the rebels compelled the Sultan to march in person for the east (1917 A.D.). As soon as the Sultan proceeded from the town of Bhogaon to Qanauj at the head of a large army, Azam Humayun and his son, Fath Khan, gave up their courage and deserted Jalal Khan after having quarrelled with him. They decided to join the Sultan, who was much pleased by this news and sent his high nobles to welcome the Sarwani on the way and bring them to the royal camp with respect and dignity.⁴ Their desertion weakened the position of Jalal Khan, who could not put a severe resistance against Sultan Ibrahim any more.

1. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 343.

2. *Firishta*, p. 189.

3. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 347.

Nizam al-Din and other writers called Sa'id Khan as the *Muqta* of Awadh instead of the *sarkar-i-Lucknow*. As a matter of fact *Masnad-i-'ali* Mian Muhammad Farmuli Kalapahar was still alive and held the *sarkars* of Awadh and Bahraich in his charge. Said Khan Yusuf Khail was appointed the *muqta* of the *sarkar* of Lucknow in 1509 A.D. as previously stated. See *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, p. 207.

4. *Firishta*, p. 189.

The martial spirit of his army was strangled out by the treacherous role, played by the Sarwanis.

Having been satisfied with the favourable change of circumstances, the Sultan stopped in Qanauj and deputed a large army under the command of Azam Humayun Sarwani to occupy Kalpi; Azam Humayun Lodi and Nasir Khan Nuhani were also ordered to help him with their contingents. They stormed the fort of Kalpi, plundered it and made all these besieged prisoners without difficulty.¹ Likewise, Malik Adam Kakar, Malik Ismail Jilwani, son of Malik Ala al-Din, Kabir Khan Lodi and Bahadur Khan Nuhani succeeded in driving away Prince Jalal Khan from Agra where he had gone to plunder and capture the fort in revenge of Kalpi.²

Now the young Sultan emerged as an all-powerful king to implement his political views by riding roughshod over the arrogant nobles. First of all he decided to curtail the power of his father's high nobles by creating a counter-nobility. He raised his own followers, the petty nobles of the previous reign

1. Before the arrival of the royal army Jalal Khan had left for Agra to take it by surprise after having entrusted the fort to Imad al-Mulk and Badr al-Din Jilwani. But he could not fulfil his intention because Malik Adam Kakar also reached Agra to oppose him at the same time. Moreover, Ismail Khan Jilwani, Kabir Khan Lodi and Bahadur Khan Nuhani had also come there after a few days. On their arrival Prince Jalal Khan gave up courage to fight and also surrender his paraphernalia of royalty on the advice of the royal nobles, although his supporters did not agree.

The nobles, thereafter, requested the Sultan in Etawah to pardon the Prince and assign the *sarkar* of Kalpi as they had promised him, but the Sultan turned down their request. The Prince, there upon, fled to the Raja of Gwalior for asylum. When the fort of Gwalior was besieged by the royal forces, Jalal Khan fled to Malwa where he could not receive any help. At last he decided to get refuge in Garhakatanga, but he was made prisoner by the Gonds on the way, and then sent to Sultan Ibrahim. Sultan Ibrahim ordered him to be killed.

2. *Firishta*, p. 190. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani* pp. 293-41, 243. Also *The First Afghan Empire in India*, pp. 175-8.

to high ranks and important posts. He also favoured those high grandees who were willing to serve him like his servants with full devotion and unwavering loyalty. Therefore, the administration of Dar al-mulk, Delhi was entrusted to the charge of Haibat Khan Gurgandaz, Karim Dad Togh and Daulat Khan Indar (probably an Indian Muslim). Similarly, Shaikhzada Manjhu (a local Shaikhzada) was sent to Chanderi as the supreme officer (*muqta*) at the same time (1517 A. D.).¹ These appointments must have caused hatred among the sensitive Afghan nobles who still held important positions, but they appear to have kept their feelings in concealments.

The widespread rebellion broke out against the Sultan when he laid his hands upon the aged *wazir*, *masnad-i-ali* Mian Bhua and *masnad-i-ali* Azam Humahun Sarwani. The former fell out of the royal favour on account of his carelessness in executing the royal orders. The Sultan considered it insolent on his part and entrusted him to the custody of Malik Adam Kakar as a prisoner.² Azam Humayun Sarwani lost the confidence of the Sultan in failing to arrest Prince Jalal Khan, who made a successful escape from Gwalior before it fell to the royalists. His flight was attributed by the nobles at court to the deliberate negligence of the *masnad-i-ali*. Therefore, he was recalled with his eldest son, Fath Khan, to Agra where both of them were humiliated and thrown into prison.³ The siege of the Gwalior

1. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 347.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 347.

The author of the *Afsana-i-Shahan* says that Mian Bhua displeased the Sultan by not giving a few hundred thousand *tankas* to the Rai of Gwalior according to the royal *farman*. But this statement seems to be wrong because the fort of Gwalior was conquered after the imprisonment of Mian Bhua, as the author of *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* and *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani* imply. *Afsana-i-Shahan* ff. 46a-b.

3. *Waqiat-i Mushtaqi*, f. 42a.

It is notable that from the very beginning of Sultan Ibrahim's reign, Azam Humayun and Fath Khan behaved as political turn-coats. At first, Fath Khan supported Jalal Khan's cause and also accepted the office of *wazir* under him while his father betrayed the Sultan by raising the siege of Kalinjar to support his son and the

fort continued to be pressed under the charge of other nobles who succeeded in taking it over in 1518 A.D.¹ The charge of this newly-conquered fort of Gwalior seems to have been entrusted to Tatar Khan Sarang Khani.²

The nobles, who appear to have resented the change in the policy of the Sultan towards old nobles, were Kabir Khan Lodi and Said Khan Lodi (Yusuf Khail). The former was executed while the latter fled to Lucknow (his *iqta*). He also took Azam Humayun Lodi with him.³ The Sultan wanted to punish these nobles in order to warn others of the ill-consequences of their insubordination and misconduct. His attitude towards the old families was never hostile as is generally assumed. For example, Dilawar Khan, son of *Masnad-i-ali* Mian Bhua, was allowed to succeed to the office and *iqta* of his father.⁴ But the severe punishments inflicted on the undesirable nobles created doubt in the minds of the old nobles about their security and, therefore, they saw their annihilation in the implementation of the royal policy. Thus they were led to think of rising in arms against the Sultan.

The success of the royal army in Gwalior was enough to bring the turbulent and fickle-minded nobles under restraint on the one hand and open new avenues for the further expansion of the empire on the other. But the rebellion of Islam Khan, the younger son of *Masnad-i-ali* Azam Humayun Sarwani in the vilayet of Kara surcharged the atmosphere with sedition.⁵ Azam Humayun Lodi and Said Khan (Yusuf Khail) created much confusion in the *sarkar* of Lucknow and also aligned with

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rebel Prince. Soon afterwards, they deserted him when his chances of success were dimmed by the indifference of the old nobles to him.

1. *Flirishta*, p. 190. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 347; Jalal Hisari, *Gwalior-Nama*, Rotograph of the MS. (B.M.), f. 157b.
2. *Baburnama*, ii/523.
3. *Waqiat-i-mushtaqi*, f. 42b.
4. *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, p. 350.
5. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, p. 232.
6. *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 91. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, pp. 349-50.

Islam Khan.¹ To quell their rebellion, the Sultan deputed Ahmad Khan Lodi, the eldest son of Khan-i-Jahan Lodi whom Sultan Sikandar had deprived of his father's *iqta* and position for the sake of *Masnad-i ali* Zain al-Din. Sultan Ibrahim restored his father's *iqta*, rank and the charge of the *sarkar* of Badaun to him. The royal favour to Ahmad Khan seems to have displeased his younger brother, Azam Humayun Lodi, for the latter thought it was his own right.

At the start the royalists could not make any headway against the rebels, who had collected forty thousand *sawars* and five hundred war-elephants.² They suffered severe reverses at the hands of the rebels. Though the Sultan was much annoyed by the failure of his generals, he sent reinforcement and also ordered the *muqtas* of the eastern territories to help the royalists in destroying the rebels. With the arrival of reinforcement, the position of the royal army improved and they prepared to deal with the rebels finally. But, before a final encounter took place, Shaikh Raju Bukhari intervened and tried to effect reconciliation.³ The rebels agreed to leave the empire of the Sultan for some other place, provided the latter would release Azam Humayun Sarwani. The condition of rebels shows that the nobles considered the Sultan as the master of the Lodi Empire. But the negotiation failed because the Sultan did not like it. He insisted on their destruction.⁴ According to his views the rebels were not to be granted safe-conduct. They were, rather, doomed to die unmourned and unsung. The acceptance of the

1. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, i/247-8.

The reason for the rebellion of Azam Humayun Lodi was that he resented the royal favour shown to his elder brother with whom he was not on good terms. Secondly, the appointment of Ahmad Khan Lodi to destroy the rebels including his own brother indicates the fact that the high nobles did not have much sense of attachment to their family members if their own interests were involved and this was always possible in polygamous families.

2. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, i/248-9.

3. *Ibid*, p. 249; *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 350.

4. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, i/249.

condition might have lowered the sovereign prestige. Being disappointed of compromise the rebels gave a fierce battle to the royalists and fought desperately but the victory befriended the royalists. Islam Khan Sarwani and Iqbal Khan, the *Khasa Khail* of Azam Humayun Lodi, were killed, while Said Khan Lodi was made prisoner by the followers of Dariya Khan Nuhani. Azam Humayun Lodi also disappeared from the political scene.¹

This victory led the Sultan to be more strict in his attitude towards the old nobles. He posted them to fight under the upstarts only to test their loyalty to him. But the nobles felt humiliated and sharply reacted against the policy of the Sultan. They sensed their ultimate destruction with humiliation. The upstarts began to overshadow certain old nobles, for they were honoured with higher ranks than those held by the former. Daulat Khan Nuhani, the servant (*Khasa Khail*) of Azam Humayun Sarwani was raised to the position to the *naib-i-saltanat* with the rank of 12,000 *sawars*.² Mian Makkhan, the ex-officer of Mujahid Khan Kambo, rose in to such prominence during his reign that his son, Hasan, was entrusted separately with the charge of the fort of Kandhar in Rajputana.³ Similarly, Shaikh Farid (a relation of Rizqallah Mushtaqi), who taught the Sultan in boyhood, was honoured with the department of *sadarat*.⁴ Shaikh Farid got such great influence over the Sultan and his favourite nobles that he brought about ruin of everyone whom he despised or suspected to be hostile to the Sultan by poisoning the royal ears.⁵ Consequently the old nobles dispersed and

1. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, i, pp. 250-1.

2. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 36a-b, for his service under Azam Humayun Sarwani, *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 23 for his ranks and status. Also *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 109-110.

3. *Baburnama*, i/529-30.

4. *Zubdt al-Tawarikh*, ff. 79b-80a.

5. The contemporary writer, Shaikh Jamal says:

«سلطان را استاد بود فرید نام - درغایت دزالت و
بطالت مشهور که هرگز از مشیت مآد و تدبیر و هست برادر جز

new persons occupied their places. This change was disliked even by the non-Afghan nobles of Sultan Sikandar as Shaikh Jamali's statement shows :¹

دوبعد وفاتشس (سلطان سکندر) دوستان او را تفرقه عظیم
رو نمود و سلسله جمعیت ایشان بگشت مردم کثر طبع و کم
فهم و بد خلق بدیوان سلطان ابراهیم مذکور ظاهر شدند -

"On the death (of Sultan Sikandar), his friends were dispersed and ruined. The foolish and meannatured people gathered around the court of Sultan Ibrahim."

Shaikh Samali, whom Sultan Sikandar Lodi had raised to the position of poet laureate at his court and who lost his privileged post after his death, was naturally displeased with his patrons successor.² But it is true that the favourites of Sultan Ibrahim had gained complete hold over the royal court and the old nobles, holding extensive and resourceful territories could not view their future without apprehension; their safety lied only in their opposition to their new sovereign. Therefore, it may be

(Continued from the previous page)

اطفال قتله و فساد متولدندی گشت صاحب اختیار گشت -

As a matter of fact Shaikh Farid was a highly educated mian and had full loyalty to the Sultan. He thought the disobedience of the nobles to the Crown ruinous for the Empire, therefore, he liked the destruction of every one who appeared to him hostile to his master. The author is against the Shaikh because he also suffered at his hands. *Siyar al-Arifin*, pp. 138-9.

1. *Ibid* p. 138.

2. *Siyar al-Arifin*, pp. 138-139.

3. *Flrishta*, p. 188.

Here Jamali explains the cause of the bitterness, caused between the Sultan and him. He says that one of the couplet of his elegy, composed on the death of Sultan Sikandar Lodi was misinterpreted before the new Sultan by his enemies, and he was thus proved guilty of harbouring ill-will towards him. The couplet was O' Emperor of the age ! Alas ! Where art thou ? So that I may pray before thee against the tyranny of the demons.

اے سلطان زمان آہ کجا آخیر- تا کلم پنهی تو از قتله دیوان فریاد-

inferred here that the conflict between the crown and the nobility was deepened by personal considerations on both the sides; it was not caused actually by any institutional crisis. No institutional principle was involved there. Some of the later writers like Firishta who seem to have incorporated legends and traditions current about the Afghan kings during their own times create wrong impressions about this conflict. For instance Firishta says that the whole atmosphere of the Afghan court changed by Sultan Ibrahim. The nobles had to stand before the royal throne with folded hands. This was not all. The Sultan further declared: "Kings do not know the ties of race or kinship. All-equally are his subjects and should pay him homage." This is a later concoction. We know it for sure that the nobles bowed, prostrated and stood before the throne of Sultan Sikandar Lodi as already discussed.

In fact, what Sultan Ibrahim Lodi wanted was that his nobles should act as his faithful servants without showing any sign of disagreement with his measures to control the views or policy. But the drawback with the Sultan was that he lacked the tact which his father possessed. His measures to control the nobility were hasty and lacked statesmanship. Thus all the steps taken by him to stamp out sedition in the Empire aggravated the situation. The nobles concealed their feelings of enmity for the time being. But as soon as they got an opportunity to rise in arms against him, they at once availed of it and thus paved the way for his ultimate fall.

Masnad-i-ali Mian Husain Farmuli, the *muqta* of Saran and Champaran, Mian Maruf Khan Farmuli, the *muqta* of Qanauj, and his younger brother Mian Taha caused tremendous loss to the royal army by deserting with their contingents and friends like Malik Ismail Jilwani, Mian Bodha Kakar, Khidr Khan Lodi, Mian Maruf Farmuli and Mian Taha Farmuli to Rana Sanga in the battle, because they were ordered to fight under the command of Mian Makkhan, a mere upstart. Their desertion caused dismay in the rank and file of the army.

which suffered great loss. Many high nobles, like *Masnad-i-ali* Ibrahim, son of Khan-i Azam Umar Khan Sarwani, Dariya Khan, son of Maruf Nuhani, and the officers and *sawars* of the royal *Khasa Khail* were killed in the battlefield, Mushtaqi attributes the losses suffered by the Sultan's army to the inexperience and immature generalship of the commander-in-chief.¹ But the rebel nobles cannot be easily absolved of their treacherous role which really wrought havoc upon their fellow nobles in the interest of the Rana. The deserters went ahead with their plans against the Sultan after having been puffed up by the victory of their ally. They proclaimed prince Ghiyath al-Din, one of the descendants of Bahlul, their king against Sultan Ibrahim about whom they declared:

سلطان مادا خال دماغ شده است ؟
 "Our Sultan has gone mad."

Fortunately, dissensions broke out among the supporters of Ghiyath-al-Din soon and unity among them became out of question.² Mian Husain Farmuli and his friends decided to go back to the Sultan and sent Mian Taha Farmuli to seek pardon. The Sultan assured them of safe-conduct, posts of importance and large *iqta's* in any of the three territories, the vilayet of

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 61b.

2. *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, p. 86; *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 92; *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaq-i*, f. 60a. Prince Ghiyath al-Din was made prisoner by the Rajputs in the battlefield after the royal army was defeated.

3. Said Khan Yusuf Khail and Fath Khan Sarwani were released on the request of *masnad-i ali* Husain Farmuli when the latter had promised to betray the Rana. As the Sultan wanted to do away with the power of the rebels in the camp of the Rana, he accepted his request and set both of them free. On his arrival in the Rana's camp, Said Khan Yusuf Khail failed in showing any sense of gratitude to the *masnad-i ali*, rather, he began to humiliate him in the presence of Rana Sanga.

Moreover, he won over Rana to his side and thus Mian Husain was left in the lurch. When the latter left for the royal camp taking his supporters, one of Said Khan's servants poisoned his master with wine in order to win the royal favour. See *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 63a-b.

Saran and Champaran, *sarkar* of Sambhal and the *sarkar* of Chanderi. The *masnad-i* all preferred Chanderi to other territories while others were reinstated in their old *iqta's*. Salahdi, who came with Husain Khan Farmuli to enter the service of the Sultan, was given a few *parganas* in Chanderi as he desired to remain there. Only Khidr Khan Lodi, the younger brother of *Masnad-i-ali* Bhikkhan Khan Lodi of Etawah could not get any *iqta*, for his elder brother was angry with him and the Sultan had regard for him. The Sultan said, "If his brother, Mian Bhikkhan, gives him anything, he should accept. I shall not consider him for anything." Since Bhikkhan was not pleased with his younger brother, the latter remained dissatisfied with the Sultan.¹

A serious crisis seemed to be resolved by the compromise between the Sultan and the nobles. But neither the Sultan nor his associates were willing to ignore the past sins of *Masnad-i-ali* Mian Husain Farmuli. Shaikh Farid instigated the local Shaikhzadas of Chanderi to kill him and also assured them of the royal favours in reward. On a certain night the Shaikhzadas surrounded the place of the *muqta*, when all his officers were posted in different parts of the vilayet, and killed him.²

1. *Ibid.*, f. 63b.

As Khidr Khan Lodi succeeded in getting Mian Bhikkhan's *iqte* by poisoning the ears of Sultan Sikandar against his brother, their relations were strained. After the death of Sultan Sikandar, Sultan Ibrahim transferred the *iqta* as well as the charge of the *sarkar* of Etawah to Bhikkhan Khan again. Khidr Khan was forced to remain in the service of his brother.

2. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 60a-65a for the affairs of Mian Husain and the details of war against Rana Sanga.

Mian Husain Farmuli seems to have been a haughty man. Once he displeased Sultan Sikandar, therefore, the latter sent Haji Sarang to imprison him in 1510 A.D. Haji Sarang won over his men to his side and then tried to make his arrest. He got inkling of the matter and fled away, to Sultan 'Ala al-Din in Bengal. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 333.

Later on, Mian Husain seems to have joined Sultan Ibrahim after the death of Sultan Sikandar. Being oversensitive, he could not like to fight under Mian Bhikkhan.

The nobles of the eastern *sarkars* and vilayets rose in rebellion when Nasir Khan Nuhani, the *muqta* of Ghazipur, disobeyed the royal *farman* by not attending the court. He also succeeded in instigating his brother Dariya Khan Nuhani, the *muqta* of Bihar, to rebel against the Sultan.¹ Masnad-i ali Maruf Farmuli also rebelled in the *sarkar* of Qanauj, but Mustafa Farmuli, the successor and son-in-law of Muhammad Khan Farmuli, the *muqta* of Awadh; Firuz Khan Sarang Khani and Bayazid Farmuli, cleaned all the eastern territories of them upto Bihar. The rebels of these *sarkars* fled to Bihar. The Sultan wanted Dariya Khan Nuhani to be destroyed by his nobles, who also held *iqtas* in Bihar. But their plan was disclosed to Dariya Khan and the nobles fled to Agra. Kamal Khan Kambo and Husain Khan Sur were the leading men among them.²

At last Mian Mustafa Farmuli proceeded towards Bihar where Bahadur Khan had declared himself Sultan after the death of his father, Dariya Khan Nuhani. But the prospects of the success of the royal army were dimmed by the sudden death of Mian Mustafa Farmuli, who was known for his indomitable courage. Mian Bayazid Farmuli, the younger brother of Mian Mustafa Farmuli, took over the command of his contingent and decided to continue march against the rebels. Soon afterwards he met the rebel army of Sultan Muhammad Shah deputed under Nasir Khan Nuhani and Fath Khan Sarwani to face the royalists. Though Bayazid put Fath Khan Sarwani to rout, Firuz Khan Sarang Khani fled away from before Nasir Khan and thus the victory obtained by Bayazid turned into his defeat.

The political conditions of the western *sarkars* were also unfavourable. Daulat Khan Lodi (Yusuf Khail), the *muqta* of the *sarkars* of Lahore and Bhera, also became afraid of the Sultan. He did not attend the court in Agra and when summoned, sent his youngest son, Dilawar Khan, on his behalf pretending his illness. The Sultan was shrewed enough to

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff 43a-b. Also *Baburnama*, ii/527.

2. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 42b; *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, ff. 54-55a.

understand the real matter. He said to Dilawar Khan: "If your father will not come soon, he will be arrested like other nobles." Dilawar Khan was taken to the dungeons, where the disobedient nobles were being punished. Dilawar Khan was seized there with a fit of trembling. When he was brought back to the royal presence, the Sultan asked: "Have you seen people who did not obey me?" Dilawar Khan trembled and prostrated.² He fled away to his father as soon as he got an opportunity.³

Alienated from the Sultan, Daulat Khan Lodi made up his mind to overthrow Sultan Ibrahim at every cost. He won over some other nobles posted in the western territories like Sulaiman Farmuli, who held the *iqta* of Indri with a rank of 6,000 *sawars*.⁴ Biban Shahu Khail (Lodi), the *muqta* of the *sarkar* of Sirhind also went to his side.⁵ Together, they invited Prince Alam Khan from Gujrat to back his claim to the throne of Delhi.⁶

Since 1523 A.D. the Sultan seems to have been landed in great difficulties. After death of Mian Mustafa Farmuli, the rebel nobles secured their position in the east, Rana Sanga and Raja Maldeo of Marwar had conquered the territories of Chanderi and Nagor respectively.⁷ In spite of all these losses the Sultan was not a man to be cowed by the defiance of his nobles. He was quick in responding to the circumstances. He deputed a large army under Bahar Khan, Mubarak Khan Lodi and Bhikkhan Khan Nuhani to do away with the rebels of the Punjab. Consequently, Daulat Khan and his relatives were driven away to Multan to seek refuge with Biloch chiefs.⁸

1. *Tarikh-i-Shahi* p. 87.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

3. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 42b.

4. *Ibid.*, f. 60b. for the rank of Sulaiman Farmuli.

5. *Baburnama*, ii/466-468.

6. *Mirat-i Sikandari*, p. 163.

7. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 56a-b, 65a-b.

8. *Baburnama*, ii/459.

Later on, these nobles gave such a tough fight to Babur in 1523 near Lahore that the latter satisfied his vanity and anger by setting fire to the *bazars* of Lahore after his hard-won victory.¹ Similarly, the nobles of the *sarkar* of Dipalpur also resisted Babur boldly and were defeated with difficulty. In order to strike terror, Babur massacred people indiscriminately and razed even the libraries to the ground.²

Daulat Khan Lodi and his sons Ali Khan, Ghazi Khan and Dilawar Khan came to see the Mughal Emperor in Dipalpur. The Mughal emperor welcomed them and also assigned Daulat Khan and his sons Jalindar, Sultanpur and other *parganas* as maintenance *iqta*. But Daulat Khan did not feel satisfied because he wanted the Mughals to help him in destroying Sultan Ibrahim. The Mughal occupation of Lahore caused a conflict between him and Babur.³

As soon as Babur turned to Kabul, Daulat Khan and Ghazi Khan imprisoned Dilawar Khan and drove away Baba Qashqa and Sultan Ala-al-Din Lodi (former Prince Alam Khan) from Dipalpur. But they could not succeed against the Mughals in Sialkot.⁴ In the meantime, the army deputed by Sultan Ibrahim to clean the western territories of the rebels and Mughals reached Sirhind. Daulat Khan found himself unable to face it effectively. However, he won over the commander of the royal army to his side, but the soldiers and other nobles returned to the Sultan.⁵

1. *Ibid.*, i/451. Also *Firishta*, p. 202.

2. *Lataif-i Quddusi*, pp. 3,64.

3. *Baburnama*, ii/451-3.

4. *Firishta*, p. 202.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 202. *Tarikh-i-Sher-Shahi*, f. 88a.

'Isa Khan Sarwani was the son of Haibat Khan, son of Khan-i Azam Umar Khan Sarwani. As Haibat Khan and his elder brother, Khan-i Azam Said Khan, were exiled by Sultan Sikandar, 'Isa Khan entered the service of the Sultan of Malwa where he made great progress for his culture and learning. On Sultan Sikandar's death, he returned to Agra where Sultan Ibrahim honoured him with the charge of the Delhi fort.

Shortly afterwards, Sultan Ala al-Din succeeded in winning over Ghazi Khan, son of Daulat Khan Lodi, and other rebel Indian nobles to make a bid for the capture of Delhi. They came to Delhi and laid siege to its fort where *Magnad-i ali 'Isa* Khan Sarwani resisted them successfully.¹ Dilawar Khan (Khan-i Khanan Lodi), Malik Ismail Jilwani, Mahmud Khan, son of Khan-i Khanan Nuhani, and Shaikhzada Main Sulaiman Farmuli began to press the siege so intensely that Sultan Ibrahim at once hastened with eighty thousand *sawars* to succour his besieged nobles.² The rebels raised the siege on the arrival of the Sultan and took this decision: "If we attack by day-light, the Afghans will not desert (to us) for the sake of their reputaion with another, but if we attack at night when one man cannot see another, everyone will obey his own orders." Therefore, when they fell on the royal army from every side, and some of the nobles deserted to Sultan Ala al-Din Lodi under the leadership of Jalal Khan Jig-hat (Lodi), the *muqta* of Kalpi,³ the royal army was thrown into confusion. But Sultan Ibrahim did not lose courage. He remained unmoved near his canopy with five or six thousand *amirs* and *sawars* of his *Khasa Khail* while the main army dispersed. As the day dawned, the Sultan saw Sultan Ala al-Din standing at a certain place with a few undred *sawars* and made a heroic charge against him. As his men were busy with loot, Ala al-din fled away.⁴ This victory of the Sultan demoralized the supporters of Ala al-Din and they deserted him. Even his own son, Jalal lost his confidence in his leadership.⁵

In short, the chaos and anarchy in the western part of the Lodi empire weakened the power of the centre on the one hand and of Daulat Khan on the other. It was difficult for both the Sultan and Daulat Khan Lodi to check the Mughals in the

1. *Baburnama*, ii/456-7.

2. *Firishta*, p. 191.

4. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, p. 256.

5. *Baburnama*, ii/457

sarkar of Lahore without mutual co-operation. The aforesaid noble and his followers were well-acquainted with the geographical conditions of the region for their long stay. Contrarily, the new nobles of the Sultan, in spite of their personal bravery, were no match for the invaders because they were familiar neither with the local population nor with the hills and ravines.

It is, however, wrong to assume that Sultan Ibrahim alienated all the old Afghan nobles. He reinstated all the old nobles who had fallen out of his father's favour. Besides, the descendants of Jamal Khan Sarang Khani continued to rule over the vilayet of Jaunpur and the *sarkars* of Chunar¹ and Gwalior. Similarly, Mian Mustafa Farmuli, the nephew and son-in-law of *Masnad-i ali* Mian Muhammad Kalapahar was allowed to succeed to his rank and *iqta* and also inherit his property.² But the reinstatement of certain nobles and the rise of the junior officers as well as the persons of less respected Afghan tribes were the main cause of the rebels.³

Notwithstanding these facts the Sultan seems to have counter-balanced the old arrogant nobility by his own favourites. As a matter of fact, he was served loyally everywhere against the rebels. A new class of parvenus and upstarts had also come to the forefront to shoulder out the old arrogant nobles. The sight of these nobles really became unbearable for the high

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1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 37a-38a. Also *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 48a. Badauni, p. 361 for Taj Khan Sarang Khan.
 2. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 53-54.
 3. See *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 60a.

Masnad-i ali Bhikkhan Khan Lodi, son of Prince Alam Khan, was superseded by his younger brother, Khidr Khan, in the *sarkar* of Etawah by the order of Sultan Sikandar. Sultan Ibrahim again assigned the charge of the *sarkar* of Etawah to *masnad-i ali* Bhikkhan Khan and Khidr Khan, thereupon, became hostile to the Sultan.

Sultan Ibrahim had such a great regard for *masnad-i ali* Bhikkhan Khan that he refused to assign any *iqta* to Khidr Khan Lodi when he came back from the camp of Rana Sanga with *Masnad-i ali* Husain Farmuli, but asked him to go to his elder brother who might give him something. It again displeased Khidr Khan Lodi.

nobles as Mian Husain Farmuli's taunt against Mian Makkhan shows.¹

If the battle of Panipat had not come in the way, Sultan Ibrahim would have done away with all his adversaries. It should not be forgotten that the success of Babur over Sultan Ibrahim was due to his superior military technique and the use of artillery and not to any lack of ability or experience on the part of the Lodi Sultan. Sultan Bahlul succeeded in checking the centrifugal tendencies among his nobles by creating a sense of brotherhood among the Afghan nobles owing to their Afghan origin and treating the non-Afghan nobles as his favourite and respected nobles. Sultan Sikandar enjoyed the confidence and services of the high nobles because the victims of his policy were the princes of the blood, who always overshadowed the nobles due to their birth and their hold over the extensive *sarkars* with large military contingents. On their disappearance from the political scene the nobles were assigned with their ranks and posts. Sultan Ibrahim had to face a different situation.²

Composition of the Nobility:

With the advent of Sikandar to power, certain changes took place in the official hierarchy. The expansion of the Empire and the need of a strong and large army under the immediate command of the Sultan led him to recruit persons regardless of race. Actually, the nobility became more broad-based than it was previously. As far as the requisite qualification is concerned, usually the noble-birth was the most preferable thing. The merit and ability of the individuals also attracted the royal attention but in special cases. Mushtaqi says: "First he asked about the lineage (of the candidate), and then granted (him) *iqta*."³

It was rarely that the persons of the obscure origin succeeded in influencing the Sultan by their hard work and high sense of duty.³ But the attitude of the Sultan towards his Hindu *rais*

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 60b.

2. *Waqi'at-i Mushtaqi*, f. 8a-b.

3. *Ibid.*, f. 8a.

and nobles was very liberal. He is reported to have demolished certain temples in the newly conquered territories and constructed mosques instead so that the *khutba* might be read in his name and the supremacy of his arms be felt by the local people there. Yet he never deprived any Hindu Rai or Raja if he paid allegiance and remained loyal to him afterwards. Indeed, the paregyrical tone of the chroniclers in prestuting Sultan Sikandar as the champion of Islam, often creates wrong impression about him. It certainly reflects the attitude of the orthodox Muslims to the services done by the Kings of the past to the religion as well as religious scholars, so that the contemporary rulers might be impressed and conform to the standard of their predecessors as narrated in the chroniclers. One example will suffice to show as to how the facts were exaggerated in certain suspects. Nizamu'ddin and following him all the latter writers say that Sultan Sikandar Lodi demolished all the temples of ancient times in Narore after its conquest. But A bul Fadl, while describing the *sarkar* of Narore in his *Al'n*, says that the fort of Narore was famous for the grand temples of ancient times.¹

The account of Sultan Sikandar's reign, as given in 'the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* and other later works, fails in providing a true picture of the age. The hagiological works from the pen of the contemporary writers give us insight in the history of the Afghan age to some extent. This literature reveals that the Lodi period is one of the most important epochs in Medieval Indian History; in this period several social

(Continued from the previous page)

If the information contained in the *Afsana-i-Shahan* can be relied on, a menial servant in the service of some nobles is reported to have attracted the royal attention by his sense of duty and hard-work one stormy night. The Sultan was pleased by him and he was honoured by a post of hierarchy. Ultimately he attained the status of an *amir*. The author does not mention his name but called him *farrash* (carpet spreader) as he served that noble in that capacity.

Afsana-i-Shahan, ff. 42b-43b.

1. *Al'n-i-Akbari*, ii (Eng. tr.), p. 189.

developments of great importance took place. The gulf between the conquered and conquerors of Hindustan was bridged and the process of the integration of Hindu and Muslim cultures was not only accelerated but almost completed. The Muslims exhibited keen interest in the sciences of Hindus¹, while the Hindus learnt Persian Arabic, taught in the madrassas and manned the State department of finance.² Certain religious movements also developed which, to some extent shaped the cultural pattern of the age and the conditioned people's attitude towards life and humanity. Kabir, Chaitanya and Nanak lived and flourished in this period; they stood for the unity of two religions, Islam and Hinduism. Unlike them the Mahadevi movement aimed at purifying the Indian Muslim Society of innovations and later adoptions which had crept into it under the stresses of the Indian Culture, while most of the Shattari saints, resembled the leaders of the Bhakti movement in their views and practices. Saiyid Muhammad Ghauth Gwaliori (a leading Shattari saint) 'popularised Hindu mystical practices amongst his disciples through his translation of *Amritkund* and established identity of connection between Muslim and Hindu mystical terminology.³

Sultan Sikandar himself does not seem to have been a man of orthodox views. He shaved his beard, drank wine secretly and enjoyed music and dance publicly.⁴ But his *Shaikh-al-Islam*, Shaikh Hussam U'ddin who came to India during the close of Bahlul's reign from Arabia was an orthodox 'alim. He toured whole of the Lodi Empire with a strong hand of

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 69a, 69b.

2. *Firishta*, i/187.

Maktubat-i-Quddusi, Shaikh Abdul Quddus, p. 337.
Badaoni, i/323.

Babur also testifies to the fact that most of artisans in the State service and the officers in the Revenue Ministry, charged with the duty of keeping accounts were Hindus. *Baburnama*, ii/

3. Cf. Prof. K. A. Nizami, Presidential Address Section II. All India History Congress's proceedings, 27th Session, Allahabad, 1965.

4. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff.

slaves, army men, *muhahishes* and religious scholars and severely suppressed the non-Islamic practices current among the Muslims.¹ It may also be stressed here that the Hindus were never interfered with. They even continued to run gambling houses in the metropolitan cities.²

As regards the actual number of the Hindus in the nobility, it cannot be explained because the chroniclers do not provide us with the figures of the nobles belonging to different racial or cultural groups. They refer some of the nobles only when they describe their involvement a rebellian or the part played by them in a battle, etc. However, from the scattered references it can be gathered that the able Hindus could enter the official hierarchy. Here we can cite a few examples to illustrate the point. In 1508, Raja Kachhwaha whom Sultan Sikandar entrusted with the charge of Narore (Narwar), was one of his trusted nobles. We know that the fort of Narore was captured after a prolonged siege in which much Muslim blood was shed. On its conquests mosques were constructed and the *ulama* were settled there with *wajah-i-ma'ash*-lands for maintenance; but strangely enough the charge of the fort³ and the territory dependent upon it was assigneds to Raja Sing Kachhwaha.

The other Hindu chiefs who were absorbed in the nobility were Ra'i Ganesh⁴ Prem Dev,⁵ Malik Roop Chand⁶ and Jagar Sen Kachhwaha.⁷ Besides there seem to have been other nobles and rassal chiefs like the Rais of Tirhut and Bhatta who had paid allegiance to the Lodi Sultan and often cooperated with the Afghan *Muqtas* of the adjacent territories.⁸ The Hindu soldiers and *sawars* could also get handsome jobs in the

1. *Lataif-i-Quddusi*, pp. 107, 108.

2. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f.

3. Cf. *The First Afghan Empire*, p. 140.

4. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/315; *Badaoni*, i/314.

He was assigned the *iqta* of Patial and Kampil, Bhogaen, etc.

5. *Ma'athir-i-Rahimi*, i/506. He had Meerut in *iqta*.

6. *Lataif-i-Quddusi*, p. 148.

7. He was given *iqta* in Chanderi. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/332.

8. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. . *Baburnama*, ii/521.

royal army without any difficulty whatsoever, and so rubbed shoulders with their fellow Muslim armymen.¹ The high nobles also employed Hindu *sawars* and small rank-holders in their contingents.²

In short, the Sultan utilized the services of his nobles, who belonged to different racial groups. The Kambo, Indian Shaikh-zadas and local Saiyid nobles rose to prominence during the period under review.³ There was no consideration of race or creed in this matter; political confederations were more important than any other thing. The non-Afghan nobles are occasionally mentioned by the Persian chroniclers, but none of them provides us with actual figures. They are mentioned either in connection with rebellions, expeditions, or conquests in the alien dominions. It may, however, be definitely stated that the members of the old Afghan and farmuli families, which rose to prominence during the reign of Bahlul, held key-posts, extensive vilayets and *iqtas* with high ranks. The Afghan nobles of small ranks belonging to different tribes such as Karrani, Kakar, Sirbini etc., were raised to high positions with the expansion of the empire, with the result that the majority of the nobles consisted of Afghans while half of the empire was held by Farmuli and other non-Afghans.

Sultan Ibrahim also followed his father's policy with regard to the composition of the nobility. Though the non-Afghans appear to have been raised by him to high positions in the nobility, the Afghans remained in majority during his reign also. He was cautious not to reduce them to minority, for it could undermine the foundation of his dynasty in the long run. In fact, he favoured the Afghans, who were either degraded during the previous reign or worked as petty officers in his own service. These Afghans were bent upon liquidating the old and respected nobles as Shaikh Jamali complains.

1. *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 70-2. Also *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/338-9.
2. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 63a. Also *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f.
3. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 65b, 66a.

Among the non-Afghans who sprang up from obscurity into prominence due to the royal favour, mention may be made of Muhammad Marghub.¹ (enmuch); Nizam Khan, a non-Afghan *muqta* of Biyana *sarkar*.² Hamid Khan *Khasa Khall*, who held Hisar Firuza,³ Mabk Sarduk,⁴ Raja Bikramajit (whom Sultan Ibrahim Lodi had assigned,⁵ The territory of Shamsabad); Ilyas Khan Turkbacha,⁶ and Salahdi.⁷ Like the favourite Afghan and Farmuli nobles, they were shown great favour by the Sultan.

A passing reference may be made here to the claim of the Lodi Sultans to Caliphate. Unlike the previous Sultans of Delhi, Sultan Sikandar and Sultan Ibrahim ventured to throw overboard the fiction of the suzerainty of the Abbasid Caliphate. Though some of the coins of Bahlul mention him as *Khalifa* and *amir al muminin*, we cannot presume that he finally abandoned the traditions of his predecessors, for his other coins call him as *naib-i-amir al-muminin*.⁸ But his successors seriously claimed Caliphate for themselves. Not only their coins but the works of their contemporary writers also bear testimony to it. Among them *madan al-Shafa Sikandar Shahi*, compiled by Sikandar's *wazir*, Mian Bhua, and *Anwar al-Aiayn*, written by Shaikh Abd al-Quddus Ganguhi are worth mentioning. Mian Bhua mentions Sultan Sikandar as *Khalifa-i rabb al-Uyun* while the titles *amir al-muminin* and *Khalifa* were inscribed on his coins.⁹ The study of *Anwar al-Uyun* reveals that Sultan Ibrahim went a few steps ahead. The high nobles, like the *muqtas* of vilayets addressed him as *Khudawand-i alam*.¹⁰ By the assumption of this title the Lodi Kings implied to draw power and authority directly from God to rule over people.

1. *Baburnama*, ii/523. He held the fort of Mahawani.
2. *Ibid.*, ii/538-9.
3. *Firishta*, i/204. Also *Baburnama*.
4. *Baburnama*, ii/477.
5. A. B. Pandey, *The First Afghan Empire*. p. 179.
6. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 44a.
7. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 63b, Salahdi was given a few *parganas* in *iqta* in Chanderi.
8. *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi*, Nelson Wright, 1936, nos. 924, 942, pp. 243, 246.
9. *Ibid.*, no. 967, pp. 250-30. Mian Bhua, *Madan al-Shafa Sikandar Shahi*, Ms. (Aligarh) f. 7a.
10. Shaikh Abd al-Quddus, *Anwar al-Uyun*, 1905. p. 18.

CHAPTER III

DESPOTISM OF SHER SHAH AND HIS SUCCESSORS

✓ Sher Shah's rise to sovereignty is marked by certain developments which brought about important changes in the realm of ideas and institutions. Sher Shah was fully imbued with the idea of his own importance and power; he made others also believe in him as he had successfully established his superiority over them in peace as well as in war even before his rise to sovereignty. He carried many fruits of his victories in the conquered territories, wiping away all that was outworn there. His achievements more than compensated for the destruction of life and property by the Mughals.¹ Though he met an untimely death in 1545, his son, Islam Shah, retained his administrative system and took important steps towards its modification and improvement, whenever necessary.

✱ Indeed, theirs was a personal government deriving its strength and glory from their personality and vigour; its enlightened character is reflected in the contemporary Persian literature. Both of them made great marks on the life of the people. They were just kings. They could succeed in ensuring peace and prosperity for their people because they had reduced their nobles to subservience and personally supervised the functioning of the administrative machinery. ①

1. Shaikh Rukh al-Din throws valuable light on the dislike the Indians had for the Mughals owing to the tyranny and high-handedness with which they treated people, irrespective of creed. Mushtaqi also provides us with information of the destruction of the Indian towns and cities by the Mughals. *Lataif-i Quddusi*, pp. 63, 68, 72, 78; *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 56b.

Over-centralization of Powers:

(1) Sher Shah seems to have been deeply inspired in the beginning of his career by the traditions of the Indian Sultans as well as by the Persian legends about government and the military romance and chivalry of the kings.¹ They moulded his personality and character. He adopted most of the reforms and regulations of Sultan Ala al-Din Khalji, but did not like to be unnecessarily fierce in his treatment as the latter had done. According to his views, the king should exert in establishing peace and prosperity and ensuring impartial justice to all without any discrimination.² But it was not possible unless the state officers were forced to implement the royal plan and policy by their just acts. In an attempt to achieve this goal, he successfully made his nobles act properly. People were encouraged to appeal to the king against the oppressive officers in authority over them.³

(2) Furthermore, the nobles posted in the central departments or the administrative units—*parganas, sarkars* and *vilayets*—were not delegated unlimited powers. Keeping the reins of administration in his own hands, the king directed the provincial

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 49a. The interesting anecdote recorded by Mushtaqi sheds light on the fact that the Persian legends were popular among the military men of medieval times. The treatment of Qutb Khan, the slain general of the Bengal army, by Sher Khan (later Sher Shah), indicates it. Mushtaqi says:

دشیرخان چون او را کشته دید از اسب فروود آمد و سر او
به زانو نهاد و آب دیده کرد - او را تجمیع و تکفین کرد و همان
قصه سکندر و دارا درگور کرد -

"As Sher Shah saw him slain, he came down from the horse, placed his head on his thigh and thus repeated the story of Alexander and Darius by performing the funeral rites"

2. 'Abbas Sarwani, *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, MS. Habib Ganj Collection Aligarh, ff. 110-2. Also 'Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, edited by Prof. Abd al Rashid pp, 126-7.
3. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 86a.
4. See my article *The Evolution of the vilayet, the Shiq and the Sarkar in Medieval India Quarterly*, Vol. V, No. 1, 1962, pp. 31-2.

governors (*muqta's*) to implement new rules and regulations by sending them *farmans* regularly.¹ His personal abilities, high sense of duty and hard work made the sound functioning of the government machinery possible. A little deviation from the path of loyalty and justice could result in disgrace or even dismissal. In such circumstances the nobles felt bound to retain the royal confidence only by their obedience and hard work as Husain Khan Panni told Mallu Khan.² We do not come across any noble, even of the Lodi period, who might have defied his authority. As regards the rebellion of 'Alam Khan Miana, he was a new-comer, who never liked to serve Sher Shah. The latter took him from Malwa after the flight of Mallu Khan and his other Afghan followers, and entrusted him with the government of the *sarkar* of *Mian-i Doab*. Dissatisfied as he was, he rose in rebellion in 1445, but Bhagwant, the slave of Khawas Khan, easily destroyed him.³

His ability, long experience in administration and high sense of duty led him to supervise the working of the State machinery personally. Having finished ablution and morning prayers, he called his ministers and secretaries (*uhdadaran* and *karkunan*) to his council room and set to his daily work. All matters concerning the affairs of provinces or the (central) departments were reported to him in detail. The king, thereupon, asked the

1. *Tarik-i-Sher Shahi*, ff. 111-112.

2. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 53a.

3. *Tarikh-i-Sher-Shahi*, ff. 95-6, 108.

uses on fire and set

The Miana Afghans resided in Malwa in considerable number. Sikandar Khan Miana and Nasir Khan Miana, two brothers were the premier noble of Mallu Khan and remained attached to him even against Sher Shah. The latter imprisoned Sikandar Khan when Mallu Khan and Nasir Khan fled away from his camp. After the departure of Sher Shah from Malwa, Nasir Khan attacked Shujaat Khan, while Mallu Khan proceeded against Masnad-i-ali Haji Khan in Dhar, but both of them were defeated by the nobles of Sher Shah.

The Miana Afghans of Malwa are also known for their rebellions during the times of Baz Bahadur and Akbar.

Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani, i/399; *Akbarnama*, ii/78.

secretaries to note down his orders which he later sent to the ministers concerned. They were executed accordingly and nobody had to enquire (anything) again.¹ Having disposed of this work, the king heard petitions received from different places and dictated his decision in Persian.²

The nobles were severely punished for their disobedience of the royal orders, and thus laxity was removed from administration.

They became careful enough not to incur the royal displeasure by any indiscreet act done either in haste or out of their lust for power and glory.

✓ Khidr Khan Turk, the *muqta* of the vilayet of Bengal, lost his position and prestige for his marriage with the daughter of Sultan Mahmud without royal permission.

This act was attributed to his ambition for independence. Being informed of his marriage, Sher Shah at once left Rohtas for Bengal and threw the *muqta* into prison, although the latter had given proof of his loyalty to his master.

Thereafter, Sher Shah warned other nobles: "Every noble of mine will be punished in this way if he does anything without my permission."³

Similarly, Barmazid, one of his old companions, was severely reprimanded for killing the Mughals left in the territory of Agra after the flight of Humayun, for he was ordered only to pursue and drive them away from Agra. Afterwards, Sher Shah pardoned him for his past services and deputed him with *Masnad-i-ali* Khawas Khan to pursue Humayun and his followers towards Lahore.⁴ (The case of Nasir Khan, the non-Afghan *faujdar* of the *sarkar* نصیر خان و تھانہ be cited. He was degraded to the second

rank in the *sarkar* for treating people with cruelty and high-handedness.) He did not distinguish between the innocent and wrong-doer. As a result, *Masnad-i-ali* Isa Khan Sarwani was appointed over him as a supreme officer.⁵

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 50a.

2. *Ibid.*, f. 50b.

3. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 94.

4. *Ibid.*, f. 86.

5. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 86.

Isa Khan Sarwani was an honest man known for his learning and generalship. Sher Shah found in him a man competent to implement his plans with regard to the subjugation of the recalcitrant elements and the establishment of peace and order. After his arrival in Sambhal, Isa Khan set to work out measures to force the rebel zamindars into submission. He cleaned up the dense forests which were used by the rebels and highwaymen as hideouts against the royal armies, and paved the way for the progress of agriculture. The roads were made safe and trade and commerce flourished in consequence.

The evidence contained in the *Lataif-i-Quddus* sheds light on Sher Shah's despotism and also negates the myth created by Abbas Sarwani that the Sur king showed unnecessary regard for the susceptibilities of the Afghans. The fact should be highlighted that Sher Shah was an absolute monarch who never tolerated any opposition to his policies. He never cared for the sentiments of his Afghan followers if they appeared differing from him on any matter as the contemporary evidence shows:

”چون فرمان شیرشاه شد که بسیمیها افغانان در قلعه گوالیار بیاورید و خواجه سراپان تعیین شدند که برگتاب بروید و بسیمیها روان سازید و اگر روان نشوند بے حرمت و بے عزت کرده و آتش در خانهها داده روان سازید“ —

“When Sher Shah ordered that the families of the Afghans (probably in certain *sarkars* of the Doab including Sambhal) should be sent to the fort of Gwalior, the eunuchs were appointed to record them in the registers and send the families, and in case they refused to move set their houses on fire and send them forcibly with disgrace.”

This is an important piece of information that gives a clue to the fact that as in other regions also in Bengal, the Afghan colonies were planted in the same way.¹ Even the important families were forcibly shifted to distant territories. Dattu Sarwani, who was an important Afghan, attached to Isa Khan

1. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, ff. 87-8, also *Tarikh-i-Daud*, p. 215.

2. *Lataif-i-Quddus*, p. 85.

3. *Sher Shah and His Times*, K.R. Qadungo, Calcutta, 1965, pp.

Sarwani, and has incorporated his experience of military life in the *Lataif-i-Quddusi* of Shaikh Ruknuddin, also feared the forcible migration of his family to Gwalior. But Dattu thinks that his family was left untouched due to the blessing of his holy Preceptor, Shaikh Abdul Quddus. In fact, his family was not sent to Gwalior because he was holding the office of a judicial officer under 'Isa Khan.¹ However, the forcible migration was not confined only to the ordinary families. There were families of high as well as petty officials in the *sarkars* of the Doab and most of them seem to have been sent away without any discrimination. The reason for sending them to Gwalior and Bengal was that Sher Shah wanted to colonize these territories with a strong Afghan population to help him in consolidating his rule over the alien Rajputs and the Bengalis as well.

There is reliable evidence that even his chosen companions who could boast of raising him to sovereignty,² never went against him for he was regarded by them as imbued with divine powers. Once the King called *Masnad-i-ali* Khawaas Khan and Barmazid to his private chamber to consult them about certain matters. The king turned to Khawaas Khan and addressed him with love that if any criminal, charged even with a serious crime, would be given to his charge, it was for him to decide whether he would be killed or pardoned. But Barmazid was ordered to kill everyone whom the king entrusted to his custody whether he deserved death or not. Khawaas Khan bowed before him and taking it as a special favour, he held a grand feast to which all the nobles were invited. On being asked by his friend, Malik Badr al-Din Maral of Samana, the reason of his overwhelming joy, he remarked: "They (the king) are shadow of God. If I had been charged with the duty of soul-ravishing and murdering, I was bound to obey."³

1. *Lataif-i-Quddusi*, p. 85.

2. *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 147. Shujaat Khan is reported to have written to Islam Shah that he should not doubt of his loyalty to him because he was one of his father's loyal followers who raised him (Sher Shah) to sovereignty.

3. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, i/342-5. The author says:

No noble, howsoever great, could look at him face to face. As it was a popular superstition in India and else where also that a gaze upon the king would clean the sinners of his sins, it continued in Sher Shah's times also. Malik Muhammad Ja'isi testifies to this fact in these words: "Again, how can I describe his comeliness, for all the world desireth the beauty of his Countenance, His comeliness surpasseth in brightness even the full moon which God created. Sin abandoneth those who reverently gaze upon him, and the whole world maketh obeisance and blesseth him, all things hide their comeliness (in shame)... ..No one can look upon him face to face, if any one see him, he remaineth with bent head."¹

Q In short, Sher Shah established a monarchy head and shoulder above the nobility. His displeasure resulted either in disgrace or degradation of the nobles, if not death. He was an absolute monarch, and it is wrong to assume that "he started with a compromise between the early Turkish principle of absolute monarchy and tribal leadership of Bahlul."² This statement is based on an uncritical study of the *'Tarikh-i-Sher shahi* and the *Afsanah-i-Shahan*. Abbas and Shaikh Kabir Batini, the respective authors of the aforesaid works were of Afghan origin, and they compiled their works long after the overthrow of the Afghan rule, when no hope was left for its revival. The authority of the Mughals was well-established everywhere in north India. These writers could now get satisfaction in magnifying the Afghan rule in accordance with their pre-conceived notions. They seem to have practised the economy of truth when the fact was disparaging. Their well-painted pictures show that the Afghans, high as well as petty could claim equality with their kings and that Afghan kings could not expect the Afghans to show them undue respect.³ But the historical fact is the other way round.

1. *Padmavat*; Malik Muhammad Jaisi, Eng. tr. A.G. Shirreff, Calcutta, 1944, p. 13.
2. R. P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration in India* pp. 96-7.
3. c. f. Shaikh Kabir and his *History of the Afghan Kings*, Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi, *Indo-Iranica*, Calcutta, December, 1966, pp. 59-60.

① The king could transfer the *iqta's* of his nobles on his own accord. The proprietary right in land went to the king, being the master he could give or take back any *iqta* on his pleasure. ② No one could express resentment over his degradation or transfer. Their prosperity and progress lay in devotion to him. For example, Shuja'at Khan held the vilayet of Bihar as its *faujdar* in 1539, but after the expulsion of Humayun from Agra he was transferred to Gwalior.¹ From Gwalior, Sher Shah took him to Malwa, where he incurred the royal displeasure by not keeping a vigilant watch on Mallu Khan who had slipped away from the royal camp at night. Consequently, he was deprived of his appointment as the *mutqa* of the vilayet of Malwa and was assigned instead only the *iqta* of Handia and Satwas for maintaining 4,000 *sawars*.² But soon afterwards he succeeded in rewinning the confidence of his master by inflicting severe defeats on the larger armies of Nasir Khan and Mallu Khan with his small following. Pleased with his services, Sher Shah rewarded him with a high rank of 12,000 *sawars* and a large *iqta* comprising Ujjain, Satwas and Mandpur *sarkars*. Moreover, Masnad-i-ali Haji Khan was recalled and the charge of the government of Malwa was also entrusted to Shuja'at Khan.³

It should also be pointed out that Sher Shah assigned the important *iqta's* of his high nobles to the new-comers whom he liked to take in his service. ③ Mallu Khan and Bhaiva Pura Mal were assigned the *sarkar* of Lucknow and vilayet-i-shamsabad respectively as their maintenance-*iqta's*, while they were held by other nobles.⁴ It is indicative of the fact that the establishment of a pure Afghan hierarchy was no consideration with the king. ④ The only consideration kept in mind with regard to the recruitment of nobles was his desire for the sound functioning of the administrative machinery, consolidation of the imperial power and the further expansion of the empire. In short, the nobles could not insist on retaining any *iqta* or post.

1. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 85.

2. *Ibid.*, f. 97. Also *Firishta*, p. 227.

3. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, ff. 97-8.

4. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 53b, 55a.

① The policy adopted by Sher Shah towards his nobles, led them to subserve the royal interests. They informed him about the problems, which faced them, sooner than his spies. They did not think it wise on their part to resolve them of their own accord. Therefore, when Khawaas Khan and Haibat Khan Niazi quarrelled on administrative matters in Lahore, the former at once informed his master about the matter suggesting that one of them should be recalled, as co-operation between them was not possible. Sher Shah recalled Khawas Khan, Isa Khan Niazi and Habib Khan Kakkar, while Haibat Khan Niazi was left there in charge of the government of all the *sarkars* beyond the river Sutlej. Mubarak Khan Sur and Hamid Khan Kakkar were also left there under him. The former controlled the territory of Roh (North-Western Frontier region of modern Pakistan) while the latter ruled over Nagar Kot, Jwalamukhi, Dihdawal and Jammu hills with iron-hand.¹ As a supreme *muqta*, Haibat Khan Niazi held the high rank of 30,000 *sawars*.²

Soon after his appointment as a supreme *muqta* (1442) Haibat Khan Niazi was ordered to seize the territory of Multan from the tyrant Biloch Chief, Fath Khan. On his approach near Multan, Fath Khan sued for peace, but Haibat Khan destroyed him.³ Sher Shah was so much pleased by his conquest of Multan that he allowed him to entrust its government to one of his officers and repopulate it because it was laid waste by the tyranny of the Bilochs. Haibat Khan entrusted Fath Khan with its administration in addition to that of *sarkar-i-Dipalpur* where he was already working. Fath Khan restored peace and order there and Multan became prosperous within a short time. He collected only one-fourth of the agricultural produce as the state share in accordance with the royal order. In recognition of these services Haibat Khan was rewarded with the high title of *Azam Humayun* and a red canopy.⁴

1. *Tarikh-i Daudi*, pp. 214-226; *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, ff. 115-125.

2. *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 226; *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 125.

3. cf. *Sher Shah and His Times*, pp. for further details.

4. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, 19-100, 115, 126. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Shahi*, 1/323.

In short, it was during his reign that the most obedient nobles constituted the ruling class. They also enjoyed the confidence of their master in return and could be deputed on military expeditions at the head of large armies or entrusted with the work of carrying on reforms in administration of the newly-conquered territories, although their implementation curtailed their executive and discretionary powers. Sher Shah's reforms and regulations clipped off the powers of officers. None of them could be indolent in executing his orders. They were really active men and worked energetically under his supervision. Hence peace and prosperity flourished in the empire.

With the advent of Islam Shah to sovereignty, most of the old nobles were destroyed as a result of the conflict precipitated by the former's doubt about their loyalty to him. He was imbued with the idea of absolute kingship. He thought that he could not implement his ideas and policies easily in the presence of his elder brother, Adil Khan, towards whom nobles could look for leadership at the time of conflict. But Islam Shah's decision against the life of his brother created an atmosphere of civil war in the empire.

Masnad-i-ali Khawaas Khan and *Masnad-i-ali* Isa Khan Niazi mobilized all their old companions to destroy Islam Shah. The high nobles like Qutb Khan wrote from Agra to Khawaas Khan promising him full support.¹ Khawaas Khan, 'Isa Khan and 'Adil Khan then came to Agra. The news of their arrival demoralized Islam Shah. In a state of mental confusion he decided to leave for Chunar and prepare for the final struggle with Sher Shah's treasures accumulated there. He allowed Qutb Khan Naib and other nobles of doubtful loyalty to join Adil Khan because their presence in the capital was considered dangerous for him. But 'Isa Khan Hajib persuaded him to prevent Qutb Khan and others and give battle to the rebels.²

1. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, ii/109.

2. Nazim al-Din mentions only Isa Khan Hajib who advised Islam Shah to give battle to the rival. But the author of the *Afsana-i-Shahan* says that Shah Muhammad Farmuli and Rao Husain Jilwani

He said to the king that he should rely on the ten thousand sawars and officers who served in his Khasa Khail during his father's lifetime, if the loyalty of others was doubtful.

At the start of the battle, the right and left wings of the royal army were broken, but Islam Shah won the lost battle by his surprise attack on the centre of Adil Khan.³ The latter lost courage and fled away. His flight also compelled Khawaas Khan and Isa Khan Niazi to run away to Mewat.⁴ Now Islam Shah deputed 12,000 *sawars* to pursue Khawaas Khan and Islam Khan Niazi. But they inflicted a severe defeat on the royal army and then fled to Kamaon⁵. The Raja of Kamaon gave them refuge. From Kamaon they used to come down and plunder the royal territories, with the result that all the vilayet lying there was laid waste.⁶

On ^{his} flight, Islam Shah found himself in a position to wreck the comple on the old nobles and materialize his views with regard to the state system. He proceeded from Agra to let

(Continued from the previous page)

persuaded the king to give battle. See *Afsana-i-Shahan*, f. 140a. The author of the *Dubdt-al-Tawarikh* says:

بعضی امرائے او تقویت و تسبیح او نموده اور اثابت و
متمکن و اشتداد و گفتند که لائق است که شما بنفس خود
و خاصان خود که اعتمادی اند بر تمام لشکر سبقت نموده
در میدان کارزار ایستاده پائے محکم کنید که هیچ کس در نظر
شما بجانب مخالف نخواهد رفت -"

Some of the nobles encouraged and inspired (Islam Shah) and fixed him to fight. They said, "It is proper that His Majesty should rely upon himself and his confident nobles and stand in the battle field with determination. Nobody would desert the enemy in the royal presence." *Dubdi-al-Twarikh*, Rotograph of the MS. of the British Museum, f. 120b.

Tabaqat-i-Akbari, p. 110. Also *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, p. 240.

Tarikh-i Affi, f. 578a.

Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani, p. 361. *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, p. 241.

Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqī, f. 59a.

Tabaqat-i-Akbari, ii/111.

Chunar to transfer the treasures to Gwalior, because he had decided to make the latter place his capital. On the way he seized Jalal Khan Jilo Sur and his brother, Khudadad, and then had them executed. Nizam al-Din attributes their murder to their complicity in the rebellion of Khawaas Khan and Adil Khan. Some other chroniclers also follow him. The author of the *Afsana-i-Shahan* says that only Jalal Khan was seized, and his brother was condemned to death soon after, for having made an abortive attempt on the life of the king.¹ Mushtaqi's account implies that there were some other reasons also for their murder. He says: "(Islam Shah) promoted the six thousand *sawars* he had in his service while he was a prince. Every one of them was promoted; the *sawar* was raised to the position of an officer, and the officer became a (high) *amir*. It disturbed the old arrangement and displeased the king of Sher Shah, who thought it humiliating for themselves in king also got angry with them in consequence."² Mushtaqi seems to be more reasonable. His *il* fir complicity in Adil Khan's rebellion been a cause, Jalal Khan Jilo and Qutb Khan Naib would have been executed soon after the defeat of the rebels.

Their murder, however, temperised all the old nobles, who thought their life insecure for the malicious nature of the king. Qutb Khan Naib fled from the foothills of Kamaon, where he was deputed to check Khawaas Khan, to Azam Humayun Niazi in Lahore. As Said Khan, the younger brother of Azam Humayun was in the royal attendance, he avoided the conflict with the king for the time being and sent Qutb Khan to the court according to the royal *farman*.³

Islam Shah sent Qutb Khan Naib with thirteen other important nobles to the fort of Gwalior as prisoners. Nizam al-Din mentions only Shahbaz Khan Nuhani, the son-in-law of Sher Shah, and Barmazid Kur, the famous general Ahmad Yadgar.

1. *Afsana-i-Shahan*, f. 138a.
2. *Waqiat-Mushtaqi*, f. 71b.
3. *Tabqat-i-Akbari*, ii/111.
4. *Tabqat-i-Akbari*, ii/111.

adds only the name of Daud Khan while Mushtaqi mentions Zain Khan, Bahar Khan and Shams Khan Niazi also.¹ According to him, these nobles were first tied to the feet of the elephants while other nobles rode over them to parade them in the camp before their death.²

Having put aside all the obstacles, Islam Shah summoned Shuja'at Khan and Azam Humayun Niazi to the court. The former obeyed while the latter postponed his visit on some pretext. As it was not thought wise to lay hands upon Shuja'at Khan alone, the king allowed him to return to Malwa, and he himself started for eastern Rohtas. The Rohtas fort also had Sher Shah's treasures which Islam Shah liked to transfer to Gwalior, because one day they could slip into the hands of the rebels.³ But Sa'id Khan Niazi fled away to Lahore.⁴ His flight compelled Islam Shah to return from his way to Delhi to prepare for the destruction of the Niazis.

Though the king did not let the Niazis get enough time to make large preparations, yet they came to Ambala with heroic determination to check the royal advance. In spite of their hasty preparations, the Niazis succeeded at least in inviting Masnad-i-ali Khawwas Khan and Isa Khan Niazi to co-operate with them against the tyrant king. Though they joined the Niazis, differences soon took place between them on the issue of succession to the throne after Islam Shah. Khawwas Khan suggested that Adil Khan should become the king but Azam Humayun expressed his own desire to assume sovereignty. His ambition displeased Khawwas Khan who decided not to fight against the son of Sher Shah for the sake of the rebels.⁴

The Niazis were defeated and driven away beyond the frontiers of the Sur Empire.⁵ Their final destruction took place in 1548-49 A.D.⁶ Thereafter Islam Shah turned towards Shuja'at

1. *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, p. 242.

2. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 71b.

3. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 111.

4. *Afsana-i-Shahan*, f. 138a.

5. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 71b. Also Badauni, p. 380.

6. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 112. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, i/326.

7. Badauni, i. 388.

Khan Sur. Since the latter could not be blamed for any fault, the king wanted to have him assassinated. But the assassin could not succeed in taking away his life. He was saved by his palanquin-bearers who had killed the culprit. Islam Shah sent his premier nobles to enquire about his health, and also intended to see him personally in order to hide his own crime. Shuja'at Khan sent the following message to the king: "I am the servant of your father. I have never cared about my life and death in his service. I am one of those thirty-five persons who co-operated with your father, raised the flag of your father's greatness and it is known to everybody. I have escaped from the danger and some day I shall sacrifice myself in your service. You should not take trouble to see me. Your kindness and inquiry (about my health) is indeed a great favour to me."¹

On his recovery, Shuja'at Khan fled from Gwalior to Malwa from where he was driven away by the king to Banswara in Gujarat. After a few years, Islam Shah pardoned him on the recommendation of his son, Daulat Khan in 1548. This time he was assigned only the *sarkars* of Sarangpur and Raisin instead of the charge of the whole of Malwa.²

The most heinous crime committed by Islam Shah was the treacherous murder of Khawwas Khan in 1551 A.D. Badauni says that Taj Khan Karrani, a highly learned man among the Afghans, was appointed in the *sarkar* of Sambhal with the specific orders to destroy Khawwas Khan. But Taj Khan totally failed in his efforts. At last, he sent Islam Shah's *farman* to him promising safeconduct. Khawwas Khan believed the *farman* and left Kamaon to join Islam Shah.³ Ahmad Yadgar supplements Badauni in certain respects. He says that first Taj Khan negotiated with the Raja of Kamaon in regard to the murder of Khawwas Khan, but the Raja paid no heed to him. Then Islam Shah wrote to Khawwas Khan: "You fought against

1. *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 174-5.

2. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, ii/176.

3. *Badauni*, p. 400.

me for the sake of Adil Khan. I know that you did not participate in it on your own initiative, but you were brought in the conflict by Isa Khan and Qutb Khan (Naib). The past is past. Now I pardon your sin. You should come to me without any fear. The Rana (probably of Marwar) has raised his head, plundered certain *parganas* of Ajmer (*sarkar*) and made the Muslim women and children prisoners. Some of the nobles were sent against him but none could succeed against him.¹

Now the questions arise—why did Islam Shah not invite Khawwas Khan after the battle of Ambala in which he had deserted the Niazis in favour of the king in 1547? Why did Khawwas Khan lay siege to the fort of Lahore after the expulsion of the Niazis and also carried on predatory activities in the royal territories? The nature of hostility between him and the king shows that both of them were determined to carry on the struggle to the last. Mushtaqi sheds light on the matter. According to him, Khawwas never liked to come to terms with Islam Shah so long as Adil Khan remained alive. But on the death of Adil Khan, he lost every charm in his life, as Mushtaqi says: "So long as Adil Khan remained ~~alive~~, he (Khawwas Khan) kept himself attached to him. As Adil Khan passed away, he said: 'I myself had no ambition. Islam Shah violated his promise which he had made on oath. Now Adil Khan is dead, therefore, our purpose also comes to an end. Islam Shah is the son of my master, and disobedience to him amounts to dishonesty.'²

1. *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, pp. 254-5.

2. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 59b-60a. Nirod Bhushan Roy, like other scholars, says about the disappearance of Adil Khan after the defeat of his supporters and army: "Khawas Khan and Isa Khan, having sustained a defeat, went to Mewat (1545-6 A.D.), while Adil Khan went to Patna and was not heard of any more." *The Successors of Sher Shah*, p. 13.

'Adil Khan was once heard of before the battle of Ambala when discussion broke out between the Niazis and Khawwas Khan on the issue of succession. Moreover, Mushtaqi, the contemporary writer, whose memoirs have not been satisfactorily utilized by the modern scholars because of the writer's haphazard way of writing, throws

But Taj Khan Karrani had him assassinated in his tent at night in Sambhal. In fact, Khawaas Khan was emotionally attached to the family of Sher Shah and could serve Islam Shah with full devotion after the death of Adil Khan, yet the king lost this precious jewel for his reactionary spirit and malicious nature. Badauni thinks that the murder of two saintly persons, Shaikh Alai and Khawwas Khan brought about not only the end of Islam Shah but also of his empire.¹

Suppression of the Nobility:

No doubt, Islam Shah succeeded in making his nobility dependent on royal good will but the harsh methods adopted by him made the life of the nobles and soldiers very miserable. They groaned under his iron hand. But their concealed contempt for him further increased his animosity towards them. Badauni says: "He became thirsty of the blood of the Afghans and more determined than before to destroy them."² In an attempt to reduce them to miserable conditions, he stopped the payment of salary and allowances of the nobles and soldiers (in 1549 A.D.). None of them, who remained with him, could get even a single pie from the exchequer. Nor they had courage to approach him for the payment of their arrears. At last, they went to Shah Muhammad Farmuli, one of the important and confident nobles, known for his culture and appreciable manners, and requested him to plead their case before the king. Shah Muhammad Farmuli went to the king and said: "Your Majesty: I saw in a dream last night three bags falling from the sky on the earth. One of them contained dust, the other gold and the third had paper; the dust fell on the heads of the soldiers, gold

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important light on Adil Khan's survival after his flight from the empire. According to him, 'Adil Khan stayed with Khawwas Khan in Kamaon and died there.

1. Badauni, pp. 408-9.

2. Badauni, p. 411:

دشمنه خون افغانان گشته و به عزم استیصال ایشان

into the houses of the Hindus, while the paper fell in the royal exchequer.¹ This moved the king, who promised the payment of the arrears of the army after his return (from Lahore) to Gwalior.

The humiliation of the Niazi ladies, captured on the destruction of Azam Humayun and Said Khan may also be discussed.

The Niazi women and the paraphernalia of Azam Humayun were given to the low-born people. They were named Said Khan Niazi, Azam Humayun and Shahbaz Khan Nuhani with the grant of drums to strike them at their doors like the high grandees of the realm. Like other nobles they came to the royal court to pay respect on every Friday night, as was the custom in India since long. On their arrival the *naqibs*² loudly announced that so and so Niazi was offering prayers with so and so. It caused much hatred among the Afghan nobles against Islam Shah, but they concealed it due to his cruel nature.³

Islam Shah destroyed all those Afghan nobles of considerable strength and prominence whom he suspected to be opposed to his political views.⁴ They were blown off by the gun-powder in Gwalior prison, and none of them could survive this except Kamal Khan Gakkhar whom Islam Shah later pardoned and raised to dignity.⁵

1. Badauni, i/387. Badauni's reference to the Hindus shows that the finance department was manned by the Hindu clerks and officers as they were expert in finance.
2. The *naqibs* used to sit in front of the gate leading into the royal hall of audience, and after scrutiny led the visitors to the Sultan. *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, p. 60
3. Badauni, i/386.
4. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, ii/115.
5. Badauni says about the survival of Kamal Khan Gakkhar that he was informed by his sister, the wife of Islam Shah, about the royal order. She provided her brother with quilts and water so that he could sleep under them after having poured water on them. The wet quilts saved him while others died when the prison was set on fire by gun-powder. Islam Shah came to see him in the morning

Driven to straits, the Afghan nobles began to conspire against the king. They succeeded in winning the support of some noble Afghan nobles, raised to high dignity by Islam Shah in preference to the former. But the favourable circumstances and the active service of the royal spies nipped all the conspiracies in the bud.

The Mankot plot, which had proved abortive, due to the promptitude and courage of the king,¹ was followed by two attempts in Gwalior (1552-3). First of them failed when Islam Shah changed his route from the town of Antari to Gwalior on getting news of the plot that the assassins would kill him on the way. Ten nobles charged with complicity in this plot, of whom Baha al-Din, Mahmud and Mada were the ring leaders, were put to death.² The third conspiracy was very serious because it was hatched by a large number of powerful nobles who had decided to place Mubariz Khan (later Muhammad Adil Shah) on the throne after the murder of Islam Shah. On its divulgence, the king decided to seize them all by surprise at the time of their assembly in the court. Somehow, they came to know about the intention of Islam Shah and gave up visits to the court to pay respect together. They rather visited the court in groups. After some time, Islam Shah fell ill and died.³

In short, Islam Shah spared no pains in reducing the nobility to subservience to the crown. But his harsh policy deprived the nobility of its best talents. All the nobles, who were brought up and trained under the veteran leadership of Sher Shah, were completely destroyed with a few exceptions, and

(Continued from the previous page)

and took pity upon him. His survival was attributed to the mercy of God. Thereupon he was raised to the position of a noble. Badauni, p. 380.

1. Mankot plot against the life of the king was designed when he was supervising the construction of the frontier forts of Shergarh, Islamgarh, Piruzgarh and Mankot in 1551 A. D. Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi, f. 12a.

2. Badauni, p. 413.

3. Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi, f. 12a.

their places were filled by the mediocres. In fact, he wrought havoc with the Sur Empire. It lasted as long as he remained alive. On his death, it began to crumble. Not a single man was left who could rise equal to the Mugal danger. Islam Shah himself was left with a few generals trained by Sher Shah, and his presence at the head of affairs could deter Humayun to cross the frontiers of Hindustan.

Reforms and regulations:

1. Sher Shah, no doubt a capable administrator, has been unnecessarily credited with the establishment of new administrative system. What he and Islam Shah actually did was to introduce certain reforms and revive old traditions which had fallen into disuse since long. Both of them took personal interest in the administrative details and compelled their officers to be efficient and honest in running the state machinery. Similarly, they added much lustre to the crown in the imitation of the previous Sultans. (As a result, a short-lived era of peace and prosperity started and the glory of Sultan Sikandar Lodi was revived as our study shows.)

2. Sher Shah was very particular about court decorum and etiquette. He held his *darbar* every day in the morning and the high peers of the empire had to be present there with their *sawars* to salute him. They arranged their *sawars*, who were always in proper military uniform laced with drawn swords and standing in the battle array, and then moved with them one by one before the king according to their rank and position. They were not exempted from this formality even on military expeditions. On such occasions all the nobles in attendance had to prepare for this review as soon as the day dawned, and moved towards the king when the royal umbrella appeared within their sight. Mallu Khan, the deposed ruler of Malwa, was so much influenced by the glittering of the swords and lances, weight and brightness of military uniform of the nobles and *sawars* in the shining hot sun that he considered himself completely unfit

1. *Waqi'at-i Mushtaqi*, f. 50a.

for Sher Shah's service and fled away from his camp.¹

① The display of power, authority and dignity by Sher Shah was really connected with his theory of kingship which was determined and shaped by the old Indian traditions as well as the political expediency. It inspired awe in the hearts of people and fulfilled the requirements of the time by creating a well-disciplined and obedient official hierarchy.

The introduction of administrative reforms was also an outcome of his enlightened theory of kingship. He modelled his reforms and regulations on those of Sultan Ala al-Din Khalji, but made them humane by avoiding the latter's cruel treatment with the officers. To keep him informed of their conduct, Sher Shah established an active espionage system. The spies were posted in all the cities and distant parts of the Empire for this purpose. The distant vilayets and cities were connected with the centre by a well-established network of roads. Consequently, the agents of the intelligence department could travel fast and easily to inform the king about the activities of the nobles.² For instance, the spies of Bengal informed the king about Khizr Khan's marriage with the daughter of Sultan Mahmud and his public behaviour in a kingly way within a short time.³ Likewise, Masnad-i-ali Shuja'at Khan was taken by surprise when he got information of his master's displeasure on his ill-treating the royal soldiers, left in Malwa to help him, although he had prevented them from sending petition to the king by redressing their grievance.⁴

① Important reforms and changes were introduced in the army organization and revenue system in northern India in his days.

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 26b-53a; *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 146-6. 152; *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, ff. 100-4.

2. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 50a.

3. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 94.

4. *Ibid.*, f. 112. *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 223. It is said that Shuja'at Khan wanted to deprive the soldiers of some portion of their maintenance-land to reserve it for the royal *Khalasa* instead of other land under the occupation of his own men.

The nobles used to turn dishonest out of their greed for money and never maintained full contingents for the service of their master. Sultan 'Alau'd-din Khalji's system of *dagh* (branding of horses) was revived to prevent the nobles from practising fraud. ¹ It is notable that none of his nobles had courage to oppose its introduction while Akbar faced widespread rebellion for its revival in 1580.²

As regards the reforms and changes introduced in the revenue system, they proved successful and considerably improved the economic conditions of the peasants. The powers of the oppressive *muqaddams* and *amils* were curtailed and the peasants were encouraged to bring new land under cultivation.³ The king was so sympathetic to the peasants that he severely punished his servants if they were found guilty of doing any harm to them.⁴ Similarly, the oppressive and refractory *zamindars* were severely crushed in many *sarkars*.⁵

Sher Shah adopted a benevolent attitude towards people and made all possible efforts for their welfare. Being satisfied with the maintenance of peace and order in the towns and cities, he turned his attention towards the rural area for the same purpose. He thought on the basis of his experience that the *muqaddams* were responsible for all crimes because they were committed either with their consent or owing to their negligence. Consequently, they were compelled to prevent crimes by successfully guarding the boundaries of their respective villages. As a result, murder and highway robbery became things of the past within a short time.⁶

1. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, ff. 112-113.

2. Vincent A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, pp. 184-5.

3. K. R. Qanungo, *Sher Shah*, pp. 374-379.

4. *Waqiat-i Mushtaqi*, f. 52a.

5. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 115; *Tarik-i-Daudi*, f. 215. Also Khan-i Azam Aziz Koka's *Arzdasht*, included in Jalal-ud-Din Isari's *Maktubat-i Khan-i Jahan wa Gwalior nama*, British Museum, f. 18a.

6. *Waqiat-i Mushtaqi*, f. 49b; *Tarik-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 115; *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 215.

① He also aimed at eradicating poverty from his empire. He fixed a good amount of money equivalent to 500 tolas of gold to be distributed among the needy people daily. Every deserving person, blind or handicapped in every village, town and city got stipends. Two kitchens were established in the city of Delhi one for providing food to the poor and the other for the royal harem and state officers. Food was always available in both the kitchens for people.¹ His generous spirit is also exhibited by his construction of roads with *Serais*, wells and trees for the convenience of wayfarers.² Badauni not only testifies to the fact that he was keenly interested in the welfare of his people, irrespective of caste and creed but also supplements our information in these words: "He issued a public proclamation that from the country of Bengala as far as western Rohtas, which is a four month's journey, and also from Agra to Mandu, at every *Kroh* a serai (rest-house) and a mosque, and a well built of burned bricks was to be established and an *imam* and a *muazzin*." A Musulman and a Hindu were also appointed to superintend the supply of water for each. A refreshment house was also kept-stocked for the use of strangers and poor wayfarers. On both-sides of the road also, large and lofty trees were planted in avenues, so that all travelers might go along in the shade of them. Traces of these still remain in most places upto the present time, though fifty two years have passed since then."³ Likewise, his *muqtas* are also reported to have maintained large kitchens for the help of the public as it was the tradition of their master. *Masnad-i-ali* Khawwas Khan spent money lavishly in helping needy people wherever he was posted.⁴

Impressed by his philanthropic spirit, high sense of justice, and the grandeur of his court, the Hindi poet of the 16th century lavishes high praises upon Sher Shah: "Sher Shah is the Sultan

1. *Waqi at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 49b.

2. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 113; Also *Waqi at-i-Mushtaqi* ff. 57a-59a.

3. Badauni, i/472-473 (Raverty).

4. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 57a-59b.

of Delhi; who warmeth the whole world even as the sun. His kingdom and throne beseem him well; low on the earth have all kings laid their brows before him. By caste a Sur and with his sword a hero, wise is he and full of skilfulness. In the nine regions the sun (or all heroes) hat set (or have bent low) before him and the seven continents of the world have all bowed before him. All his kingdom he won with the might of his sword, as did Alexandar, the *Zulqarnain*. On his hand is Solomon's ring, and, with it, he gave gifts to the world with full hand. Majestic is he, and mighty lord of the earth, like a pillar he supporteth the earth and maintaineth the whole universe. "Muhammad belessed him and said, Reign thou from age to age. Thou art the Emperor of the world. The world is a beggar at thy door."¹

Similarly, Sher Shah won the approbation of the leaders of thought and ideas among the Hindus for his good government, liberality of mind and the glory of reign. Like the Muslim poets, Hindu poets also seem to have been attached to his and his successor's (Islam Shah) court. Shaikh Kabir mentions the name of some Sur Das along with Manjhan and Muhsin, who were attached to the royal court. Mir Manjhan wrote his famous *Madu Malti* during the reign of Islam Shah.² Here, Bhanu-Kara's mention of Sher Shah in one of his verses is worth-citing because it shows the respectful feeling of the Sanskrit poet about the reigning king.

श्लोकघे वा तदघे यदि हि विनिर्हित दुवण दुर्दृष्टः

किं निश्चिन्नं तदा स्यान् कवि कुल-विदुषां काव्यकोटिश्वराणाम् ।

वाहाश्चेद् गन्धबाहाधिक-मुमग रयाः पञ्चषा काण-खेज्जा,

का हानिः शेरशाह-क्षितिप कुल, अणेनू ककोटी श्वरस्या ॥

"Nothing is lost to us-the leaders-the leaders of thought and wisdom and authors of innumerable works-if destructive criticism is hurled at a minor half verse, or half of it composed by us, by malicious people who have not understood the (real)

1. *Padmavati*, Malik Muhammed Jaisi, Eng. Tr. A.G. Shireff, Calcutta, 1944, pp. 9-10.

sense. Similarly, if among the millions of horses of Sher Shah, which in speed excel the wind, a few (five or six) happen to be either one eyed or lame, what does it matter?"¹

As regards Sher Shah's attitude towards *ulama*, saints and *sayyids*, he resumed all the *imlak*; i. e. land-grants which they had received from his predecessors, and instituted inquiry to know the deserving persons. Having ascertained the necessary facts, he favourably considered the cases of just claimants, and satisfied them by land-grants and stipends. The dishonest persons, who had occupied land through the connivance of the corrupt *amils* under Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, Babur and Humayun, were deprived of it. It also deserves to be noted here that Sher Shah was also liberal in granting land and villages to the Brahmins whom he considered deserving on account of their piety, learning or any service to the state. No doubt this was an old practice as it goes back to his predecessors also,² but Sher Shah seems to have excelled them in this respect. The interesting anecdotes, contained in the medieval Persian works shed valuable light on the fact that Sher Shah granted villages to the Brahmins as to the Muslims in *milk* or *inam* even when he chatted with some wayfarer or villager on way to some territory and got impressed by any good quality of the person.³

Sher Shah appears not only to have maintained good traditions of his father with regard to the State system but he also further overcentralised the state machinery. The nobility and army were reorganised, new grades were introduced and inspectors, were appointed from among the eunuchs to look after the proper maintenance of the troops and essential army equipment by the nobles and officers outside the centre. Similarly, the *iqtas* of the nobles in certain important regions were resumed

1. *Society and State in the Mughal period*, Dr. Tara Chand, (Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel Lectures), The Publication Division, New Delhi, 1961, p. 81.

2. *Afsana-i-Shahan Humayuns' farman*, regarding the land-grant to a temple, as cited by Sri Ram Sharma, *Religious Policies of the Mughals*, p. 10.

3. *Tarikh-i*

for the *khalsa* and the nobles were paid in cash. By these reforms, Islam Shah had thus bureaucratised the nobility.¹

Like Sher Shah, he took interest even in minor details of the administration of his empire and sent orders to the officers directing them with regard to the government affairs on every Friday. Since he had no regard for the Islamic *sharia* in making laws, the *qazis* and *muftis* were not allowed to interfere with his orders and decisions even if they were objectionable.²

Islam Shah is also reported to have imposed ban on the convivial meetings held by the nobles. The dancing girls were taken away from them, so that they might not hold *akharas*.³ But, unlike Sultan Ala u'd-din Khalji, Islam Shah neither banned the social gatherings among the nobles nor prohibited wine-drinking. The nobles could establish matrimonial relations among themselves without the permission of the king. The other restrictions imposed on the nobles were that none of them could have used the red tent as it was reserved for the king alone. They were also denied the right of possessing elephants except the weak female-elephants for carrying luggage.⁴

Measures were taken to enhance the prestige of the crown. The high nobles, who held the ranks of 5,000, 10,000, 20,000 and 30,000 *sawars* were ordered to set up a lofty tent on high poles every Friday; chair was placed in its centre on which were kept the shoes of Islam Shah, and the nobles sat at their proper places with their bowed heads in front of them to show

1. cf. Chapters, V and VI, for Islam Shah's reforms, introduced in the nobility and the *iqta'-System*.

2. Badauni, p. 384.

3. "The *akhara* is an entertainment held at night by the nobles of the country. Four pretty women lead off a dance and some graceful movements are executed, four other are employed to sing while more accompany them with cymbal. Two play the *pakhwaj*, two the *upang* and two women holding lamps stand near the circle of performers." *Akbarnama*, as quoted by Prof. N. B. Roy, *The Successors of Sher Shah*, p. 66.

4. Badauni, p. 384.

their respect. Thereafter the *amin* read out the royal *farman* containing new regulations and reforms to be carried out by the nobles concerned. If anyone disobeyed the royal *farman*, the spies informed the king and exemplary punishment was inflicted on the defaulter.¹

① Though Islam Shah was cruel towards his high officers, he was very benevolent and kind to the common people. He provided them with security of life and property by holding the *shiqdars* responsible for every loss suffered by them. Like the *muqaddams* of the villages, the *shiqdars* of the *parganas* were accountable for every crime committed in their jurisdiction. If some theft was committed and the culprit was not traced out, the *shiqdar* had to pay the price of the stolen property to its owner. Once a *shiqdar* complained before the king: "Your Majesty: Everybody, whose property is lost, is compensated by the *shiqdar*." The king soberly replied that it was all right if he got it.²

② It may also be pointed out that Sher Shah and Islam Shah were seriously interested in administering impartial justice to their people. Every person, whether high or low, was equal in the eyes of law. Sher Shah is reported to have said that the best virtue of a monarch was his sense of justice, and all the great kings professing different religions administered it impartially.³

Later on, his love for justice became proverbial and Badauni writing during Akbar's reign, took pride in the fact that he was born in the reign of the *Sultan al-adil* or just king (Sher Shah). He almost eulogises him in these words: "In his reign justice was so widespread that if, for example, an old man holding a golden tray in his hand had lain to sleep whenever he felt inclined, no thief or ruffian would have dared to take it away

1. Badauni, p. 385. Badauni himself witnessed this ceremony in Bajwara (*sarkar* Biyana) performed by Farid Taran, the *muqta* of the *sarkar* of Biyana, who held the rank of 5,000 *sawars*.

2. *Afsana-i-Shahan*, ff. 15a-b.

3. *Tarikh-i-Shar Shahi*, f. 110; *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 126.

from him. Thanks be to god that the writer of this '*Muntakhab*' was born in the reign of so just a king: to use the words of the Prophet, may the peace and blessing of God be upon him, I was born in the reign of the just king". (1540).¹ Malik Muhammad Jaisi, a contemporary of Sher Shah compares him with Umar, the second caliph of Islam for his love of justice. Though Jaisi's style is panegyric, yet it contains truth and may be quoted: I tell of his justice, how it is upon the earth. Not even to a crawling ant doth anyone dare to give pain. Naushirwan was called 'The Just', but even he was not equal to the justice of Sher Shah. He did justice like unto 'Umar, for the shout of praise to him was heard over the whole world. No one dareth even to touch a nose-ring lying fallen on the ground, (much less to pick it up and appropriate it). On the very highway do men cast about gold (yet none snatcheth it). The cow and the tiger walk together on the same road, and both drink water together at the same landing ford. He straineth milk and water (mixed together) in his court, and separated the one from the other. He marcheth, with piety, justice, and sincerity, and the weak and the mighty be kept on even terms.² Similarly, Mir Manjhan, the author of *Madhu Malti*, praises Islam Shah that every person benefited from his impartial justice and peace and prosperity prevailed everywhere in his empire due to his just rule.³

Composition of the nobility

For certain political reasons the ruling class was made more broad-based by the Surs than it was under the Lodis. Sher Shah's lineage made it impossible for him to attract the members of the privileged families of the Lodi period at the start of his military career.⁴ He was bound to recruit the

1. *Badauni*, p. 473.

2. Malik Muhammad Jaisi, *Padmavat*, Eng. tr. by A. G. Shirreff, Calcutta, 1944. p. 12.

3. Mir Manjhan, *Madhu Malti*, edited by Mata Prasad Gupta, Allahabad, 1861, p. 12.

4. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, I, 53.

Afghans of ordinary background as well as non-Afghans who had no hesitation in entering his service. As already discussed in the preceding chapter that only the Lodi, Sarwani, Nuhani, Farmuli and certain old Indian families remained in prominence and the Afghans belonging to other Afghan tribes, such as Sur, Niazi, etc. could not occupy privileged positions during the Lodi period. Sher Shah's rise to power brought the latter to the forefront. He not only assigned high positions to Surs and Niazi's but also favoured the Sirbini Afghans who had been completely ignored previously. The Sirbinis were the most degraded Afghans and dealt in trade on a very small scale. Sher Shah raised them to ranks and then they also increased in wealth and prosperity.¹ Sarmast Khan Sirbini was a high noble and continued to enjoy his status till the accession of Sultan 'Adil Shah Sur. In the beginning of the latter's reign he was killed by Sikandar, son of Shah Muhammad Farmuli. The other Sirbini noble of importance was Ikhtiyar Khan Sirbini to whom Sher Shah had entrusted the charge of Rohtas Sarkar along with the treasures accumulated in Rohtas fort.² The low-born people were raised to the noble status by Sher Shah's successors also, for they rendered important services in implementing the royal policies better than the old nobles.

An examination of the Afghan and Mughal chronicles reveals that Sher Shah furthered not only the Afghan cause but also attracted the anti-Mughal Indians in a considerable number for his help. He provided them with an opportunity to strike against the Mughals under his veteran leadership. His rise to sovereignty, therefore, gave birth to a class of nobility which was composed of different persons of different caste, section and creed. In fact, Sher Shah's early adherents were the first persons to be considered for all the important posts, high ranks

1. *Afsana-i-Shahan*, f. 158a. Nizam al-Din corroborates Shaikh Kabir's statement when he refers to Sikandar Khan Farmuli's remark against Sarmast Khan showing that the Sirbinis were formerly petty traders. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, ii/20.

2. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaq* f. 50b. Also *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 215-216.

and large *iqtas* for their past sacrifices and long services. All of them either belonged to the insignificant Afghan tribes or were the Indians of unprivileged families.⁷⁰

Next to them came the surviving members of the old privileged families of the Lodi period who, in spite of their contemptuous attitude towards Sher Shah, had to enter his service, for Sultan Mahmud Lodi and Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujarat had totally failed in destroying the Mughals. Sher Shah's rise to power compelled them to join him and win over his confidence. Besides, the new-comers who could distinguish themselves in devotion to the king were also promoted to positions of importance in the government. The requisite qualifications for a noble to make rise were his personal abilities and his loyalty to the sovereign. Consequently, all the persons who had gathered under him in the beginning of his career, whom Abul Fazl denounces as scoundrels and wicked people² were naturally raised to the highest positions in the empire for their unwavering loyalty and devotion.

¹ Before rejecting the commonly held view that Sher Shah "stood for the assertion of the Afghan power, co-ordinated all

1. 'Abbas Khan Sarwani's account of Sher Shah's rise would have us believe that Sher Shah stood for the Afghans only and he made up his mind to expel the Mughals by uniting the Afghans in 1528, but a critical study of his book with other reliable sources of information shows that Sher Shah could not think the expulsion of the Mughals from India possible till 1531, when Sultan Mahmud Lodi was finally defeated. It was only after the year 1536 A.D. that he emerged as a strong and powerful man after having conquered the kingdom of Bengal and seized hold over the impregnable Roatas (in Bihar). His victory over Humayun at Chausa in 1539 A.D. by treacherous means also reveals his doubt about his success in a fair play. The negotiation of peace between Humayun and Sher Shah at Chausa also goes against the account of Abbas Khan Sarwani. Had Humayun accepted all the terms offered by Sher Shah, the battle might have been avoided, and the latter's rise to sovereign authority might have been impossible. See *Tazkirat al-Waqiat*, ff. 16b-17a.

the broken pieces, and fought for the recovery of the sovereignty that once belonged to the Afghans. It should be kept in mind that the Farmuli and other non-Afghan nobles—Hindus and Muslims alike did not fight under Sultan Mahmud Lodi, son of Sultan Sikandar for the assertion of the Afghan power but against the foreign Mughal rule.¹ They really wanted the restoration of the Lodi house, the members of which had led them for 75 years. Their long rule had developed its roots deep into the Indian soil and the long period of prosperity, peace and benevolence brought by it also made people look towards the Lodi Sultans as their own.

In the beginning Sher Shah seems to have alienated many Hindu Rajas and *zamindars* and also the Farmulis by his highway robbery and predatory activities in the territories of the neighbouring *zamindars*, and maltreatment meted out to Fath Malika, the widow of Mian Mustafa Farmuli². But his achievements and rising power attracted people round him. The expulsion of the Mughals was a blessing for them. Everybody, who had experienced their cruelty, rejoiced at the happy consummation of Sher Shah's heroic struggle. The mass rising of the villagers and townsfolk, denounced by the Mughal writers as *ganwars* (rustics) against the fugitive Mughals after the battle of Qanauj (1540 AD) cannot be rejected as their love for plunder³.

The presence of the Hindu and Muslim soldiers in Sher Shah's personal army like those of his nobles indicates that there was no special consideration for the Afghan origin in

1. *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 94.

2. *Istahf-i-Quddusi*, p. 73-74.

3. *Tarikh-i-Sher-Shahi*, f. 55. For instance, Raja Mitter Sen, a powerful *zamindar* of Laknur (now Shahabad in Rampur district) was not friendly towards Sher Shah, but obeyed Nasir Khan, the *muqta* of the *sarkar* of Sambhal, for fear of Sher Shah. *Tarikh-i-Sher-Shahi*, ff. 80 and 88.

4. *Tazkirat-al-Waqiat*, 20b; *Humayunama*, Gulbadan, p. 70. *Waqiat-i-Mustaqi*, ff. 51a.

recruitment for the government service.¹ The majority of the Afghan nobles during the period under review remained because they constituted the backbone of the ruling class in northern India. But the non-Afghan nobles were also regarded as an indispensable part of the nobility for helping the king in keeping the arrogant and heterogeneous Afghans, belonging to different tribes and also torn by family jealousies under his iron hand.

✓ In fact, Sher Shah was the king of all Indians, and the merit of a noble was the only charm to win his favour. The non-Afghan nobles were also patronized to counter-balance the Afghans. Sher Shah reposed such high confidence in his non-Afghan nobles that even the governorship of extensive provinces could be entrusted to their charge.

① The establishment of an exclusive Afghan nobility could not be expected from Sher Shah. It might have been difficult for him and his successors to keep them under check because the Afghan nobles could serve an Afghan king with devotion only when the latter had a counter class of strong men to terrify them with the fear of replacement.

1. It seems that the Hindu Officers and *sawars* served in the royal army as well as in the contingents of the nobles in large number as the provisions of vegetarian meals in feasts arranged by the nobles shows. Moreover, there are separate references to the Rajput *sawars* in the royal *Khasa Khail. Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 58a-59b.

As regards Sher Shah's policy towards the Rujput *zamindars* and chiefs, it has been discussed in some details in the following chapter.

2. The figures of the nobles prepared on the basis of works of the medieval writers who mention the names of nobles in respect of certain extraordinary events, though by no means exhaustive, yet they shed important light on Sher Shah's policy towards the composition of the nobility and show the positions held by the non-Afghan nobles who far outshone many Afghan nobles of the noble houses, not only in their achievements but also in dignity and power. I have analysed the data to show the relative positions held by the nobles belonging to different groups with the help of tables elsewhere. C.f. *Studies in Islam*, New Delhi, July, 1965, Vol. II, pp. 180-187.

With the advent of Islam Shah to sovereignty the number of non-Afghan nobles, mostly of low-birth, appears to have considerably increased. Islam Shah had 6,000 *sawars* in his *Khasa Khail* whom he promoted to the ranks of *amir* and officers after his accession as already mentioned. Moreover, the conflict between the crown and the old nobles of Sher Shah also led Islam Shah to raise low-born people to high posts in order to crush the old nobles. As a result many upstarts came to the forefront to dominate the official hierarchy.⁽¹⁾

Although we do not have much data to show the exact number of the low-born nobles, the scattered references to them contained in the medieval literature give us the impression that they were patronized in a considerable number. Iqbal Khan, who was originally a weaver and served the king as a footman, was shown such high favours that he became an associate of the king and held a rank higher than many Afghan nobles¹. Similarly, Hemu, a petty marketing inspector (*shahna-i-bazar*) during Sher Shah's reign, was raised to the dignity of a high noble.² In addition to the low-born persons, the Afghan and non-Afghan nobles, who belonged to the respected families and could not win Sher Shah's favour, were also taken in the royal confidence with other officers.³ Furthermore, Islam Shah was very kind towards the foreign immigrants like his father. They were honoured with royal favours and absorbed in the government service according to their merits. Badauni's account of his reign shows the arrival of the foreigners from the Muslim countries and their absorption in the Indian Muslim society as the respected men.⁴

As regards the persons of non-Afghan high families, they were shown due regard by Islam Shah. We occasionally come across the non-Afghan nobles of high families due to the lack of the interest of the Afghan chroniclers in writing the

1. Badauni, p. 411.

2. Ibid, p. 389.

3. cf. *Studies in Islam*, New Delhi, July, 1964, op. cit., pp. 182-183.

4. Badauni, pp. 391-3.

accounts of the nobles. But they also seem to have held good positions in the official hierarchy. The inscription of Bihar Sharif shows that one Saiyid Yahya was the *muqta* of the vilayet of Bihar in 1548 A.D.¹ Similarly, Abul Fazi's account of Khwaja Phool, known as Muhammad Khan, who enjoyed Emperor Akbar's confidence also, throws light on Islam Shah's policy towards the nobility².

- As regards Sultan Muhammad Adil Shah, he patronized his own men to get rid of Islam Shah's favourites. He granted high ranks to the persons of obscure origin. A Bhagat boy, whom he had taught the art of music during the previous reign, was raised to the rank of 10,000 *sawars* with the title of Mujahid Khan³. Similarly, Hemu was honoured with the highest position in the Sur Empire. The latter also got advantage of his authority by raising his friends and relations to important posts and ranks in order to strengthen the royal army against the rebels. Tahariyal, Hemu's nephew, and Bhagwandas were raised to prominent positions⁴. Likewise, Sultan Ibrahim Sur, who advanced his claim to kingship against Adil Shah, also granted ordinary men the ranks of *amirs* and *khans* to strengthen his forces, even if they joined him with a few *sawars*⁵. But this was certainly a period of political crises when everything was thrown into confusion, and which brought about the fall of the Sur Empire in 1555 A.D.

A few words may also be added here about the claim of the Sur kings to Caliphate. Like the Lodi Sultans, the Surs also called themselves the Caliph of God. Their coins as well as inscriptions on their buildings call them *khalifat al-zaman*, i.e., the caliph of the age⁶. Thus they also implied to draw power and authority directly from God to rule over people.

1. *The Journal of Bihar Research Society*, Vol. XLIII, Sept. Dec., 1957, parts III & IV, pp. 237-8.
2. *Akbarnama*, Vol. II, p. 136.
3. *Badauni*, p. 431.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 431; *Akbarnama*, Vol. II, pp. 39-40.
5. *Badauni*, p. 433.
6. *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi*, Nos. 1257, 1258, etc., p. 323. Cf. M.A. Rahim, *History of the Afghans in India*, pp. 84-5 for the successors of Sher Shah.

CHAPTER IV

SHER SHAH'S RAJPUT POLICY

The Medieval historians, including those Mughal writers who had bias towards Sher Shah for driving out the Mughals from India, are in agreement on Sher Shah being a just and benevolent monarch. He is credited with the establishment of peace and prosperity in his Empire and giving concrete shape to his political ideals and schemes of socio-economic well-being.

Among the modern writers Prof. Qanungo was first to publish a monograph under the title of *Sher Shah* in 1921. Besides describing Sher Shah's life and achievements in political and administrative fields, Prof. Qanungo also analysed his religious-political views and presented him as the precursor of Akbar in adopting an enlightened religious policy towards non-Muslims¹.

Shortly afterwards, Prof. Qanungo was criticised by Mr. H. Beveridge in a letter for playing down Sher Shah's guilt in connection with the massacre of Puran Mal's Rajputs after the surrender of Raisin². In 1940, Prof. Shri Ram Sharma also censured Prof. Qanungo for the same reason and stated that Sher Shah was not unlike his predecessors in his religious bigotry. He holds that Puran Mal of Raisin and Raja Maldev of Marwar were destroyed by Sher Shah to earn religious merit³.

Prof. Qanungo, who started as an admirer of Sher Shah's political system, seems to be influenced by the criticism of the aforesaid scholars. Therefore, he changes his statements that

1. *Sher Shah*, Calcutta, 1921, p. 417.

2. Cf. *Sher Shah and His Times*, p.x.

3. Cf. *Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, Sri Ram Sharma, p. 11.

he made in 1921 with regards to Sher Shah's liberal religious-political ideals, and denounces him as a theologian and *mulla* in his revised work, *Sher Shah and His Times*,¹ published in 1963. Since he has utilised different sources, available in Persian, Hindi and Rajasthani containing information about Sher Shah's friendly attitude towards the majority of Rajput chiefs of Rajputana, he is led to make self-contradictory statements. For instance, while discussing the treacherous role played by Puran Mal against the Afghan officers after Sher Shah's return from Malwa in 1542 and Puran Mal's destruction by the latter in consequence in 1543, the learned Professor states: "No incentive of outraged piety was necessary, as political reasons sufficiently explain and justify Sher Shah's attack on Puran Mal in 1543". This might not have been altogether unprovoked. We have to take note of the fact that Puran Mal had left a contingent of Rajputs under his brother, Chaturbhuj in Sher Shah's service when Puran Mal was given leave of departure at Gagron hardly a year before..... These Rajputs of Raisin evidently fled with the Mianias of Nasir Khan from the neighbourhood of Ranthambore..... So the provocation was there, and therefore there could not be any treachery on the part of Sher²."

(In the appendix to the same chapter Prof. Qanungo discusses Sher Shah's guilt in the massacre of Raisin and accuses him of treachery and perfidy) He says, "so we have to revise our opinion and withdraw the benefit of doubt from Sher who stands clearly condemned by the verdict of history."³ (Similarly he is self-contradictory when he deals with Sher Shah's conquest of Marwar and the establishment of his supremacy in Rajputana at the same place and in the same sentence. "Sher's campaign", says Prof. Qanungo, "marked the last phase of the policy of repression followed by the Delhi Sultans from its very inception towards the Rajput race, as well as the first

1. Cf. *Sher Shah and His Times*, pp. 30-49.
2. Cf. *Sher Shah and His Times*, p. 385.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 391.

phase of the policy of conciliation and of honourable co-operation ushered in by him to build up and sustain a powerful Indian Empire.¹ How could it be possible for a person to follow both, the policy of repression and the policy of conciliation and honourable co-operation towards the same people at the same time? A religious bigot could not win over the tyrannised people for building up a powerful Empire.

To describe Sher Shah's Rajput policy in its historical perspective calls for a critical re-examination of the historical data, contained in our sources of information. A careful study of the problem, however, leads to different conclusions, and when all facts and circumstances are taken into consideration, one finds it easy to present a correct picture of Sher Shah and his age.

A Practical man of affairs who had gathered ample experience in administration and states-manship, Sher Shah could not ignore the Rajput chiefs who constituted a force almost everywhere in north India and were thus of great service to him. His Rajput policy seems to have been shaped in his early days when he was called upon to govern the small *iqta* of his father during Mian Hasan's absence in Jaunpur. He is reported to have befriended the loyal and faithful *zamindars* and destroyed all those who could not be reconciled to his rule easily. On the destruction of rebel chiefs, he took the Ujjainya Rajputs along with others and conferred upon them the *zamindari* rights. The Ujjainya Rajputs, whom Sher Shah favoured in the beginning of his career sprang up into prominence after his rise to power.²

Sher Shah continued to follow his policy of conciliation towards the *zamindars*, Rajput and non-Rajputs alike even after

1. *Sher Shah and His Times*, p. 417.

2. Cf. *Tradition and Genealogy of the Ujjainiyas in Bihar*. Brahma Deva Prasad Ambasthya, Proceedings of the All India History Congress 24th Session, 1961, pp. 122-3, 127.

The article is the translation of a Hindi document, produced in the first half of the 17th century by Bodhraj. This is available in the Khuda Bakhsh Library at Patna.

The growth of his power in and outside Bihar, and benefited from their support and co-operation in controlling the conquered territories. Prof. Qnungo rightly states, "It was also his policy to recruit the administrative personnel from the province itself, and to press into his services the local Hindu and Muslim aristocracy with a view to making the administrative change over as smooth as possible for the conquered people.¹" But it must be remembered that the nobles taken in the royal service in this manner were never the persons of doubtful loyalty.

The existence of the powerful *zamindars* not only substantiates the fact discussed above but also tends to show that the Muslim rulers could not think it advisable to antagonise this powerful element in the Indian polity. They rather depended upon their co-operation in the administration of the Sultanate; the petty *zamindars* worked as intermediaries between the State and the peasantry, while the big *zamindars* holding sway over large territories enjoyed the position of the vassals and thus were required to pay annual tribute and provide military contingents in the time of need. As already discussed, by the times of the Lodis the vassal chiefs and their descendants began to be considered as the part of the nobility, with the result that they had to maintain fixed number of troops for the service of the Sultan.

Sher Shah not only pursued the policy of the Lodis with

1. *Sher Shah and His Times*, p. 222.

But on the same page Prof. Qanungo falls into error by calling Khizr Khan Turk to whom Sher Shah had entrusted the charge of Bengal in 1539, as a noble of Bengal origin. In fact, Sher Shah was wise enough not to assign the charge of an extensive and resourceful vilayet to anyone outside the circle of his old and trusted men. As Bengal was the most extensive vilayet in the Sur Empire for the conquest of which Sher Shah had to lose much in men and material, it could not be entrusted to a Bengali noble whose loyalty was not beyond doubt. Indeed, Khizr Khan Turk was an old follower of Sher Shah and the latter had high confidence in him.

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regard to the Rajput and other hereditary chiefs but also went a few steps ahead. But he was very strict and severe in his dealings with all those whom he considered his rivals or disobedient to him. The case of Maharetha chero, a powerful zamindar of the Dravidian stock who ruled over the territory of Palamau (Bihar) sheds light on his policy towards the chief in hostility to him. Though Mushtaqi refers to his destruction, he is too brief to give us any clue to the nature of relationship between them. Abbas is the first writer to furnish details in this regard. He implies that Sher Shah spared no pains in persuading him to come to terms with him, but in vain. Maharetha chero persisted in his predatory activities and refused point blank to acknowledge his suzerainty. Hence his destruction by Khawwas Khan in 1539-1540.¹ This is indicative of the fact that the hereditary chiefs or zamindars were confirmed in their zamindari rights on the acceptance of conditions of obedience and service to the Sultan. It was only in the case of recalcitrant chiefs that a severe policy was pursued; their territories were either taken under *Khalsa* or assigned to the nobles as maintenance-*iqtas*.

✓ However, Sher Shah appears to have continued a considerate policy towards the zamindars and Rajput chiefs even after the establishment of his supremacy over north India. The scattered references to zamindars found in the chronicles in connection with certain events that attracted the attention of the chroniclers, give a clue to the fact that they were left untouched in their ancestral possessions on usual conditions.²

1. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 56a *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 69.

Prof. Hodivala identifies the region of Palamau in Bihar as under Maharetha Chero's zamindari on the basis of local traditions. He also states that the real name of the chief attacked was Bharat Rai, "a renowned border chieftain, more probably a bold and successful cattle-lifter." Cf. *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, Bombay, 1939, p. 454.

2. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 88.

Here the example of Raja Mitar Sen of Lakhnor may be cited.

✓ As far as the treatment meted out by Sher Shah to the Rajput chiefs of Malwa and Rajputana in the beginning of his rule is concerned, it was also nice and friendly. On his occupation of Malwa, Sher Shah confirmed all the Rajput chiefs in their territorial possessions and only decided to transfer Muslim chiefs, Mallu Khan and the Miana Afghans to north India even when they had acknowledged his overlordship, for he was not sure of their loyalty to him. He wanted to stabilise his position in Malwa with the support of the Rajputs, including Raja Puran Mal of Raisin. Mushtaqi is the first writer who furnishes interesting information about the embitterment of relations between Sher Shah and Puran Mal. But in an attempt to give religious significance to Sher Shah's campaign against Puran Mal, he omits the real cause responsible for the destruction of the chief attacked, and simply states that the latter was destroyed for doing wrong to the Muslims of Chanderi during the reign of Sulan Ibahim Lodi. Since the later writers, including Abbas incorporate Mushtaqi's account in their respective works, it may be briefly stated: Having taken over the possession of Ranthambore fort, the king came to Agra (1542). Again, he proceeded to Bengal but there he fell ill. He did not take his meals for seven days. In the same illness, he ordered the army for return journey. His associates persuaded him not to undertake journey as he required rest, but in vain. Sher Shah said to them that he had decided to wreck vengeance on Puran Mal for doing wrong to Islam in Raisin during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi,

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He was friendly to the Mughals and soon after their expulsion he paid allegiance to Sher Shah in consonance with the custom. He had very good relations with Qazi Abdul Wahab of Sambhal.

Prof. Qanungo identifies Lakhnor with Luksar in the district of Saharanpur. But the region of modern Luksar formed the part of Saharanpur Sarkar during the period under review. In fact, Lukhnor was a pargana in the sarkar of Sambhal and now it is called Shahabad and forms the part of Rampur district. Cf. *Sher Shah and His Times*, p. 332.

because he had prayed to God at that time to retrieve the loss done to Islam if he would have power to do it. Amir Sayyid Rafiuddin, the famous theologian of the day was also consulted; whether the destruction of Puran Mal by treacherous means was justifiable; the theologian replied in affirmative. Then Sher Shah came back to Agra, and after his stay there for sometime, started for Gwalior; thence he deputed Prince Jalal Khan to Bhilsa (Jan. 1543) to wrest it from Puran Mal. Shortly afterwards he himself reached Bhilsa and sent his *farman* to Puran Mal in Raisin to the effect that he should visit the royal court.

The fort of Raisin was besieged and then Puran Mal surrendered it to Sher Shah because Qutb Khan *naib* (Sur) had assured him of safe-conduct. But Sher Shah did not keep his word and destroyed the Rajputs in cold blood.¹

There are certain points at issue. We know it for certain that Raisin never formed the part of the Lodi Sultanate. As regards Chanderi *sarkar* which included the pargana of Bhilsa also, it was conquered by Maharana Sanga, who had assigned it to Medini Rai, for the latter had turned hostile to Sultan Ibrahim Lodi after the assassination of *Masnad-i-ali* Mian Husain Farmuli, as already discussed. Therefore, the charge levelled against Puran Mal of doing wrong to the Muslims of Chanderi or Raisin during Ibrahim Lodi's reign is baseless. The Muslim chroniclers distort these facts owing to their anxiety to present Sher Shah as the champion of Islam. The falseness of their view is evident from the fact that Sher Shah having seized Chanderi from the men of Puran Mal, entrusted it to the charge of a nephew of Medini Rai who was in his service. Medini Rai, belonged to the Chuhan Rajput tribe and his family was driven away from Chanderi by Babur in 1528, while Puran Mal belonged to the Tunwar branch of the Rajput tribe. There was a perpetual hostility between the two families. For political reasons Sher Shah favoured

1. *Waq'at-i-Mushtaq* ff. 54, 55.

* the nephew of Medini Rai and used him against Puran Mal.¹ Thus it is clear that the accounts of Mushtaqi and Abbas as furnished in this regard are not very much trustworthy and may be rejected as devoid of factual basis. The main cause of estrangement between Sher Shah and Puran Mal seems to have been the latter's disloyalty to the former after his return from Malwa in 1542. Puran Mal remained sympathetic to Mallu Khan and the Miana Afghan chiefs of Handia who rose in rebellion against Sher Shah's nobles after his departure. Prof. Qanungo has already discussed it in details, as cited above.

We may now discuss Sher Shah's guilt with regard to the massacre of Puran Mal's Rajputs after the surrender of Raisin. There is no dearth of evidence to show that Sher Shah was always unscrupulous in his dealings with all those whom he considered a menace to his rule in any region. Religious considerations were ignored and both, Hindus and Muslims fell victim to the deceitful methods employed by him for their destruction. Even the Afghans were no exception. Khan Khanan Lodi was killed and Shah Mahammad Farmuli was thrown into an iron cage² for their unwavering loyalty to the

1. Cf. *Sher Shah and His Times*, pp. 385-386.

2. *Afsana-i-Shahan*, ff. 100b-101a, 141b.

Shaikh Kabir is the only writer who furnishes full information about Shah Muhammad Farmuli's imprisonment in an iron cage. He states that Shah Muhammad Farmuli was the son of Mian Maruf Farmuli (the Muqta of Qanauj Sarkar) who had rebelled against Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. But Shah Muhammad remained loyal to the Sultan till his fall in 1526. Thereafter he entered Babur's service while his father was one of the sworn enemies of the Mughal rule in India. Babur assigned the charge of the Saran sarkar to Shah Muhammad Farmuli where he fought and defeated his father more than once as Babur mentions with pleasure. On his occupation of the Mughal territories in the East, Sher Shah took Shah Muhammad as prisoner and put him in an iron cage for his past conduct. Later on he was released on Prince Jalal Khan's recommendation. Nizamuddin, and Firishta and Ni'matullah incidentally quarrel with Sultan Adil Shah Sur and do not provide any details.

Mughals before his rise to kingship. The region of the Ghakkars was laid waste because of the Pro-Mughal attitude of the Ghakkar chief.¹ The case of the Jat and Biloch chiefs of the Lakhi jungle and Multan can best illustrate the point. Notwithstanding the fact that the Jat and Biloch chiefs (both Muslims) had entered his service and were therefore left in their territories in 1541, they were destroyed by Hāibat Khan Niazi in 1543 at the instance of Sher Shah. We know that first Haibat Khan Niazi lulled them into a false sense of security and then laid his hands upon them. Even the intervention of a saintly person of eminence could not prevent him from playing false to them.² Therefore, the problem can be studied only in the context of the political conditions obtaining in Sher Shah's time and also with reference to his political ideals and dealings with different chiefs belonging to different religious and social groups.

Similarly the causes of Sher Shah's invasion of Marwar in the beginning of 1544 also demand a fresh interpretation of historical data available in different sources. Here also Mushtaqi and Abbas should not be relied upon without a critical examination of their statements, regarding the causes of invasion, in the light of contemporary Mughal and later Rajasthani chronicles. Mushtaqi briefly states that Sher Shah decided to destroy Raja Maldev because the latter had been guilty of killing the Muslims of Nagore during Ibrahim Lodi's reign. According to Mushtaqi Maldev's wakil came to visit Sher Shah's court in Agra but the king dismissed him without showing any favour. Then the author says that the Muslim *Muqta* of Nagore was the son-in-law of Maldev whom the latter had killed by treachery and suppressed Islam in the *Khitta* of

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Tabaqat-i-Akbari, ii/120 ; *Firishta*, 233 ; *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, i/392.

1. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 85.

2. *Ibid.*, f. 92. Also *Sher Shah and His Times*, p. 293.

Nagore. As Sultan Ibrahim Lodi did not retrieve the honour of the Muslims, Sher Shah took vow to punish Maldev as he had done in the case of Puran Mal.¹ First, Abbas repeats Mushtaqi's statement while discussing the causes of attack on Marwar and then incorporates details about the battles fought between Maldev's generals and the Afghans at different places in Marwar.² Contrary to them the Mughal writers help us in analysing the causes of Sher Shah's conflict with Maldev in their proper perspective. They reveal that there were only political reasons for hostility between Sher Shah and Maldev.

Prof. Qanungo has discussed Sher Shah's relations with Maldev at different stages on the basis of the Mughal and the Rajasthani sources. It is crystal clear that Maldev was first to adopt a hostile attitude towards Sher Shah because of his apprehensions about a conflict with him over the territory of Nagore which once formed the part of the Lodi Empire. Maldev's father, Rai Gaga had wrested it from the *Muqta* of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. For retaining his hold over Nagore and other territories, Raja Maldev, who had occupied the throne of Marwar in 1531 after killing his father, started negotiations with Humayun in 1541 when the latter was safe at Bhakkar, and promised him full support against the Afghans. But Humayun was much more serious about the conquest of Sind than to pay any heed to Maldev's proposal at that time.³ Shortly afterwards the political situation in north India completely changed in Sher Shah's favour as his rule was well established in all the conquered territories. Therefore, in 1542 Raja Maldev was forced to think in terms of making peace with Sher Shah when the latter had already seized Nagore. The annexation of Nagore to the Sur Empire took place at the time when Humayun's hope of seizing Sind from its ruler was frustrated and so he had sent an envoy to Jodhpur for making

1. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 56b.

2. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, ff. 105-106.

3. Cf. *Sher Shah and His Times*, pp. 367-8.

a military alliance against Sher Shah (August 1542). Since Sher Shah kept himself informed of the activities of his adversaries through his efficient spies, he also sent his envoy to Maldev to persuade him to be friendly to him and also promised the award of the territories of Nagore, Alwar and any other that he would like, in case he captured Humayun and handed him over to him. Outwardly Maldev became friendly towards Sher Shah but could not please him by laying hands upon Humayun who had entered his kingdom for help soon after the arrival of his envoy at Maldev's court. Maldev simply drove him away, and his act must have enraged Sher Shah. "Had Maldev contemplated treachery," says Prof. Qanungo, "his arm was long enough to reach any place in the Indian Desert to capture every Mughal alive.....At any rate, the precipitate retreat of Humayun and the flight of his envoy from Jodhpur eased the situation for Maldev, who now sent troops in pursuit of the Mughals in order to keep up appearances with inexorable Sher sitting tight in his territory.¹" However, Sher Shah turned from his side only to lull him into a false sense of security and then punish him after the destruction of Puran Mal who was comparatively a weaker chief.

Besides, the presence of a formidable and ambitious ruler like Maldev in Rajputana could not be tolerated by Sher Shah. He got rid of such people by fair or foul means. Moreover, Maldev's own relatives whom he had deprived of their territories had entered Sher Shah's service and were thirsting for revenge. They were Kalyan Mal and Bhim, the sons of Rai Jaitmal, the ruler of Bikanir whom Maldev had killed, and Biram Dev of Medta who had joined Sher Shah in Ranthambore in 1542. These allies of Sher Shah were satisfied in November, 1542, when Sher Shah undertook military expedition against Marwar. On the occupation of Marwar (May. 1544) the sons of Jaitmal of Bikanir and Biram Dev were reinstated in their territories

¹ Sher Shah and His Times, p. 370.

with high favours¹ and they co-operated with the officers of Sher Shah posted in different territories under *Masnad-i-'ali* Khawwas Khan.

Thus the charge of religious fanaticism, levelled against Sher Shah is not supported by the historical facts. His political views never seem to have been influenced by religious considerations. One of the marked features of his age was the growth of a synthetic culture that had brought the Hindus and Muslims together. Religious eclecticism was popular. The Hindus and Muslims were not divided on communal lines. The Hindu nobles served as trusted grandees of the Empire. The Muslim nobles employed Hindu officers and *vice versa*.² In point of fact medieval people believed in the principle of loyalty to the master, whosever he might be, as Jaisi holds: He who dies in his master's business departs with bright countenance. He who betrays his trust and runs away, his face is blackened as he flies.³

The available data, though scanty, shows that Rajput princes continued to serve the Sur Empire with full loyalty till its fall in 1555. Some of them were granted the status of high grandees in the Afghan nobility. For instance, Raja Ramba Gwaliori, the descendant of Raja Mansingh of Gwalior was granted a sizable *iqta* in Malwa where he rendered important services to Sher Shah and his successors fighting under the command of Shuja'at Khan Sur, the supreme *Muqta* of Malwa.⁴ A similar treatment was meted out to all those Rajput chiefs who willingly submitted to Sher Shah's authority and were

1. Cf. *Sher Shah and His Times*, p. 396.

Prof. Qanungo says about the reinstatement of the sons of Jaitmal in Bikanir: "Sher had a duty to fulfil and a tremendous advantage to gain by restoring Bikanir to his proteges."

2. *Waqiat-i-Mushraqi*, ff. 51b, 63a.

Even Maldev appears to have favoured Muslims in his kingdom. Cf. *Sher Shah and His Times*, p. 355.

3. *Madumalti*, Eng. tr. p. 301.

4. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 54a.

never suspected of disloyalty. Biram Dev to whom Sher Shah had restored the territory of Medta (70 miles east of Jodhpur) was associated with Khawwas Khan for consolidating the Afghan rule in the alien territory. In recognition of his excellent services he was also given a few *parganas* as additional *iqta* in the *sarkar* of Ajmer for maintaining his contingent for the service of the king. He continued to serve Sher Shah and his successors till the last.¹ Likewise Rao Sutran of Bundi whom Maldev had driven away, was given back his territory by Sher Shah on usual terms of service². The territories of Falodhi and Pohkaran seized from Maldev were restored to Raval Lunkaran of Jaisalmir by Khawwas Khan according to Sher Shah's order. The above mentioned territories were a bone of contention between the Rathor and the Bhati chiefs³. The Kachhwahs were also befriended. As regards Raja Udai Singh of Mewar, he willingly surrendered the fort of chittor with all its dependencies including Kumbhalgarh to Sher Shah, and then was left without any interference⁴.

In the passing a few words may be added about the terms and conditions of peace with the hereditary chiefs and big *zamindars*. It appears from the account of Abbas about Sher Shah's dealings with the Ghakkhar and Biloch chiefs of the Punjab and Multan that they were required to maintain a fixed number of troops, branded by the imperial officers for the royal service⁵. In exceptional cases, the chiefs might have been exempted from having their horses branded as Sher Shah is reported to have done in the case of the Biloch chief of Multan before his destruction by Haibat Khan Niazi. The similar policy must have been adopted by Sher Shah towards the princes of Rajputana. They were placed under the supreme

1. Cf. *Sher Shah and His Times*, p. 411.

2. Cf. *Sher Shah and His Times*, for details about Rai Sutran's relations with Maldev.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 410.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 415-416.

5. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 114

Muqtas of Marwar and Ranthambore, *Masnad-i-'ali* Khawwas Khan and Prince 'Adil Khan respectively.¹

On Sher Shah's death, Islam Shah continued his father's conciliatory policy towards the hereditary chiefs and *zamindars*.

Masnad-i-'ali Haji Khan whom Islam Shah entrusted with the charge of the territories of Mewat, Ajmer, Nagore and Jodhpur after the flight of Khawwas Khan from the Sur Empire, seems to have established very cordial relations with the Rajput princes, holding territories within his vilayet. Alam Chand Kachhwaha, a relation of Raja Bhara Mal served as Haji Khan's wakil and naib and continued to enjoy this privileged position till the latter fled to Gujarat in 1556. Haji Khan is also reported to have married the daughters of Raja Bhara Mal Kachhwaha of Amer and the sister of Mota Raja, son of Maldev; Mota Raja had reconciled himself to the Afghan rule and got a sizable *iqta* in return, while his father was constantly fighting for the recovery of his lost kingdom.² This is not at all surprising because in a polygamous society the son could turn hostile to his father for personal reasons.

Islam Shah's relations with Raja Paras Ram of Gualior in the Siwalik hills also sheds light on his policy in this regard. He showed high favours to the Raja of Gualior. Abdullah says on the authority of some earlier work, now not extant, that Islam Shah was so kind to Raja Paras Ram of Gualior that he raised him to the dignity of a high grandee in his Empire. Such beautiful buildings were constructed in Gualior territory by the royal order that local people were amazed by their grandeur, for they had never visited their like before. Islam Shah stayed in Gualior for sometime and thence started for Mankot where also he had a fortress constructed.³

In short, Sher Shah and Islam Shah pursued a policy of

1. *Ibid.*, ff. 107, 114.

2. *Afsana-i-Shahan*, f. 178a.

3. *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 177-178. Abdullah says about the location of Gualior.

دہلیس گوالیار کو ہست کہ بوقت رفتن کانگڑہ و نگر کوت

on the death, Islam Shah could his
 interest in the state of affairs and here
 Sher Shah's chief 108 zamindars. In 1540
 Sher Shah's chief 108 zamindars. In 1540

conciliation and co-operation with regard to the zamindars and Rajas, living within the boundaries of their Empire. Sher Shah was hostile to those alone whom he considered his rivals in politics or who were undependable. Generally he was tolerant towards all irrespective of race or creed ; all of them benefitted from his generous and benevolent rule. In fact, he was always anxious for the well-being of the state and the people. He had will as well as ability to give concrete shape to his political ideals and the schemes of socio-economic progress. He was certainly the forerunner of Emperor Akbar in many respects. But, the difference between Sher Shah and Akbar was that the former remained content with the temporal leadership of his Empire and so never appears to have interfered with the religion of any person. Even Shias could be favoured by him¹. Contrary to him, Akbar's desire to assume the religious leadership of the Empire in addition to political leadership, raised a storm of clouds against him. The ulama among the Muslims

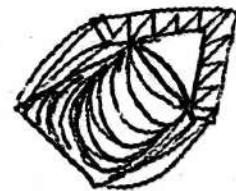
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دست راست جنوب رویه میانه کو همها واقع است -

This Gualior is situated between the mountains in the south from the side of Kangra and Nagarkot.

1. Abbas represents Sher Shah as the champion of orthodoxy who was anxious to suppress heresy in Hindustan. That he had directed Shuja'at Khan, the Muqta of Malwa to march against the kingdoms of the Deccan after receiving the news of the capture of Kalinjar by him (Sher Shah), for Shi'ism had become the state religion in the Deccan kingdoms. But this is not borne out by historical facts. To disprove it we can cite the example of Kaji Chak, a Shia noble of Kashmir whom Sher Shah had supported in his struggle against the Sunnis in Kashmir. Sher Shah, impressed by the scars of numerous wounds which Kaji had received in various battles, welcomed him graciously and conferred upon him the title of Khan Khanan and gave him 5,000 horse and two elephants under the command of Adil Khan and Husain Khan Serwani. But the Afghans could not succeed in their fight against the Kashmiris. Cf *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, Prof. Mohibbul Hasan, Calcutta, 1959, pp. 133-134.

did not bear his interference with their religion. Consequently they preached hatred against him, with the result that "the pleasant land of India, says Abul Fazl," became full of the dust of opposition.¹" While discussing the activities of the Naqshbandi saints in the Mughal Empire, my revered teacher, Professor K.A. Nizami observes : As a matter of fact, had Akbar not interfered in the religious sphere, the religious and cultural forces which were working in India and had given birth to cosmopolitan and synthetic trends, as expressed in the *Shattari* and the *Bhakti* movements of this period, would have themselves worked out a synthetic religious approach²."



1. *Akbarnama*, iii/532.

2. Cf. *Naqshbandi Influence on Mughal Rulers and Politics*, Islamic Culture, Hyderabad-Deccan, January, 1965, pp. 45-46.

CHAPTER V

ARMY ORGANIZATION

Little attention has so far been paid to the army organization under the Afghan kings. A study of the relevant evidence contained in the contemporary Persian sources indicates that the military organization under the Lodi and the Sur kings witnessed some new developments which continued during the succeeding period also. These developments also help us to understand the administrative set-up obtaining during the period under review and also the policies of the Afghan kings with regard to the organization of the nobility.

The Lodi sultans, no doubt, organized their army on the pattern of the previous sultans of Delhi, but they infused a fresh spirit of manliness and chivalry in the military life in northern India which has lost its old grit. Prior to the advent of Bahlul Lodi in Delhi as Sultan, the military generals and their dependent *sawars* were behaving like a disorderly rabble in the military campaigns for more than a hundred years.

The establishment of the Lodi power in India was really marked by the rise of intrepid generals and soldiers whose main characteristic was their archery, combined with tactical uses of mobility. As regards the pattern of the army, it was traditionally divided into three parts :— (i) the sawars, (ii) the elephants and (iii) the foot-men. The first two parts were given greater importance than the last due to their mobility and effectiveness in medieval warfare. The pivotal position in the disposition of the army was held by the *sawars* (cavalry). Therefore, in forming the royal Khassa Khail, i.e., the personal army of the Sultan, the kings paid their main attention to the *sawars*. This pattern was also followed by the nobles and

military generals, great as well as small. By the time of the Lodis the contingents of the nobles also began to be called their *Khasa Khails*.

Khasa Khail ✓

① The *Khasa Khail* constituted a very important section of the army under the Sultans of Delhi. The *Khasa Khail* was the name given to the sawars and officers under the immediate command of the Sultan. But it is very difficult to trace the origin of this name. The first reference to *Khasa Khail* is found in Firishta's account of Malik Raja, one of the notable careerists of the reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq. Malik Raja's ancestors had served the Khalji and the Tughluq Sultans as high nobles, but he himself was a poor man due to the vicissitudes of fortune. With great difficulty he succeeded in getting himself employed as a petty *Khasa Khail* under Firuz Shah. Shortly afterwards he attracted the royal favour by sheer dint of merit and was ultimately raised to the rank of 2,000 *sawars* with the grant of the *iqta* of Khandesh¹. The successors of Firuz Shah also seem to have had their *Khasa Khails*. Once Sultan Mahmud (ob. 1412 A.D.) is reported to have left a number of *sawars* from his *Khasa Khail* corps and a hundred elephants with Muqarrab-ul-Mulk to protect Delhi when he was leaving for Gwalior and Biyana². The corps of the *Khasa Khail* continued to exist till Emperor Akbar's reign when it was named as *Ahadis*³.

1 Firishta, Vol. II, Naval Kishore Press, p. 276.

2. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 154.

3. Mehtar Khan was originally a *Khasa Khail* of Emperor Akbar but the latter raised him to a high mansab of 3,000 zat and 3,000 *sawars* for his abilities.

Mehtar Khan was arrested in Kara Manikpur in some battle (perhaps during the early years of Akbar's reign) and was appointed in the royal palace to work as one of the gate-keepers.

دہمہتر خان خاصہ خیل از کدہ مازنکپور باسیری آمدہ
در خدمت در بانی خادمان محل حضرت خلیفہ الہی کردہ
بسر تہ امارت رسید۔

Zakhirat-ul-Khawanin, Vol. I, (Pakistan), p. 22 & p. 26 for Pahar Khan *Khasa Khail* and Farhat Khan *Khasa Khail* of Akbar.

Competent persons were usually taken in the *Khasa Khail* corps irrespective of race, caste or creed. Sometimes the slaves captured in wars and originally entrusted with menial work, were transferred to this corps, provided they impressed the king with their merit; hence their rise and progress¹. However, it is wrong to assume that the *Khasa Khails* were the members of the *Shahu Khail* of the Lodi tribe of the Afghan race, as Mrs. Beveridge did². It was not a creation of the Lodi Sultan at all, but it was an age-old military corps consisting of the favourite slaves and other confident people serving in a reserve force under the immediate command of the sultans. Even the sultans of the provincial kingdoms, which came into existence after the death of Sultan Muhammad Shah, son of Sultan Firuz Shah, had *Khasa Khails* apart from the contingents of their nobles. Abul Fazl refers to Qutb-ud-din Babar Khay, who held the high rank of *Khasa Khail* of the last sultan of Gujarat whom the latter had destroyed owing to his doubt about his loyalty.³

Similarly the nobles and the princes of the blood had their *Khasa Khails* subservient and loyal to them, most of them being either slaves, purchased or made prisoner in wars, or free born persons brought up under the patronage of the nobles and princes⁴. If some noble or prince happened to occupy the throne of Delhi or assumed sovereignty in some vilayet he raised the members of his *Khasa Khail* to higher dignity in

1. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

2. *Baburnama*, Eng. (foot-note) p. 456.

3. *Akbarnama*, Naval Kishore Peess, Vol. III p. 265.

4. Iqbal Khan was the slave *Khasa Khail* of Azam Humayun Lodi, son of Khan-i-Jahan Lodi, who had joined hands with the rebel, Islam Khan, son of Azam Humayun Sarwani during Sultan Ibrahim's reign. Likewise Daulat Khan, whom Sultan Ibrahim raised to the position of his naib was formerly a Khanazad *Khasa Khail* of Azam Humayun Sarwani because his father had served the latter and he was brought up under his patronage. *Tarikh-i Daudi*, p. 91. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Bib. Ind. Vol. I, p. 349. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 23a.

preference to those already serving from previous times. But all the *Khasa Khails* who were raised to the dignity of nobles by a new sultan ceased to be part of the royal *Khasa Khail*, for they were assigned *iqtas* and separate ranks. Their vacant places were filled by fresh recruits¹. Sometimes the *Khasa Khail* officers were also appointed as *Shiqdars* in important *parganas* and cities as officers in charge of administration, and the army, stationed in different *parganas* of *Khalsa* in a *Sarkar*². They were the able and experienced *Khasa Khail sawars* whom the sultan had promoted to the ranks of officers in the *Khasa Khail* corps. Usually all the *Khasa Khail sawars* seem to have started their career from the status of a *sawar*, and promotion depended on their merit and achievements on the battlefield. Yusuf Khan seems to have been the highest officer in the *Khasa Khail* of Sultan Bahlul, for his name has been included in the list of the high dignitaries of his reign³.

With the expansion of the Lodi Empire under Sultan Sikandar, the royal *Khasa Khail* must have expanded. His policy of centralisation was also bound to give much importance to his personal army.⁴

Like their predecessors, the Lodi sultans appointed a

1. The nobles of Sultan Bahlul who came with him from Sirhind at the time of his occupation of the throne of Delhi were formerly his *Khasa Khails* and later on they became high nobles having large *iqtas* and contingents assigned by their master. After their appointment to important posts, the Sultan seems to have constituted a new personal army (*Khasa Khail*). He is reported to have extended good offers to the Afghan immigrants who would enter his own service in preference to his nobles. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 5a.
2. Hamid Khan *Khasa Khail* was the *Shiqdar* of the city of Hisar Firuza and the army stationed in its dependencies. *Baburnama*, Vol. II, p. 465.
3. *Flrishta* p. 174. Sultan Bahlul is also said not to have ridden on the horses of the royal stable (*Khasa*) but those of his high nobles with a view to pleasing them and keeping their martial spirit alive.
4. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 12b.

specific number of the *Khasa Khail sawars* and officers to fight under their distinct generals as a mark of favour. Sultan Sikandar is reported to have posted a good number of them under the Sarwani nobles in the centre, while the Lodis, Shahukhails, Nuhanis and the Farmuli nobles were to fight in the back, right and left wings respectively against Sultan Husain Sharqi in 1495.¹ As Sultan Ibrahim remained in his capital except on a few occasions, his nobles launched all the important expeditions during his reign. But they were given a good number of the *Khasa Khails*, among whom the sawars and officers were included. Once a large number of them was detached to fight under Mian Makkhan against Rana Sanga, but most of them were killed on the battlefield due to the incompetence of the Commander-in-Chief.²

① The Sur kings also continued to attach importance to their personal armies (*Khasa Khail*) owing to the undivided loyalty of its members to the crown. Though Sher Shah was very fond of introducing reforms in every department of the state, he never seems to have made any change in the *Khasa Khail* corps. His old *Khasa Khails* who belonged to different racial groups and had adhered to him long before his rise to kingship, were raised to the dignity of nobles even before 1540 A.D. Shuja'at Khan, Sher Khan's famous *Muqta* of the Vilayet of Malwa, was originally his *Khasa Khail* like his slaves and *Khanzadas*.³ Similarly the sons of Sukha, the supreme slave of Farid (former name of Sher Shah), were his *Khasa Khails* and were shown greater favour than the Afghan followers. They were Khawwas Khan the elder, Shihab-ud-din and Shamsher Khan. When Khawwas Khan the elder was drowned in the ditch of the Gaur fort during siege operations in 1538 Shihab-ud-din was granted his title of Khawwas Khan and sent to Gaur to fill his brother's place.⁴ Soon afterwards he emerg-

1. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 61b.

2. *Zakhirat-al-Khawanin*, p. 163.

3. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 60a.

4. *Tarikh-i Sher Shahi*, f. 60a.

ed as one of the most important nobles of Sher Shah. His younger brother, Shamsheer Khan was also assigned a separate rank and *iqta*¹. Haji Khan who was the brother-in-law of Khawwas Khan and originally a slave of Sher Shah, also enjoyed high dignity throughout the Sur period, and always served as the *Muqta* or supreme officer of a vilayet (Province)². Like him, Habib Khan Sultani also seems to have been raised to the status of an important noble from slavery³. According to Shaik Kabir, the famous Barmazid Kaur was a *Khasa Khail* and not a noble, who might have joined Sher Khan in the beginning of the latter's career unlike the nobles of the Lodi period⁴.

As regards Sher Shah's *Khasa Khail* after his accession to the throne, he had one lakh fifty thousand *sawars*, and twenty-five thousand foot-soldiers and artillery men under his personal command, while a specific number of *sawars* and artillery men was posted in every fort, *sarkar* and vilayet to help the *Muqtas*⁵. Therefore, his personal army along with the contingents of the supreme nobles of the Empire turned the army camp into a huge moving city at the time of military expeditions. This grand army was divided into different wings (guards) at the time of march. Jaisi's description of his army camp, though panegyric in tone, sheds light on the grandeur and formation of Sher Shah's army camp; "I tell of the

1. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 107a.
2. Abul Fazl calls Haji Khan as the slave of Sher Shah while Mushtaqi mentions him as Haji Khan Sultani. The term Sultani was also used for the slaves during the pre-Mughal period. *Akbarnama*, V. II, Bib. Ind. p. 20. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 73a-b. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 89a, for Haji Khan's relation with Khawwas Khan.
3. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 173a.
4. *Afsana-i-Shahan*, f. 61-b.
5. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 50a.

Abbas Khan Sarwani also refers to the *Sawar-Soldiers* who were posted by Sher Shah in Malwa whom Shuja'at Khan liked to deprive of maintenance land. But later on Shujaat Khan changed his mind in fear of Sher Shah's wrath. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 122a.

heroism of this king, Lord of the world, the weight of whose array is greater than the world can bear. When his army full of horsemen advanceth, covering the earth, mountains crash and fly away in powder, night cometh from the clouds of dust which eclipse the sun, so that man and bird alike goeth home to bed. The land taketh flight, and goeth up into the firmament; earth-dust covereth each continent, Yea the world, the whole creation and the universe. The Heavens tremble and Indra quaketh in fear; the snake-god vasuki, fleeth and hideth himself in the lowest-Hell. Meru Sinketh down, the oceans dry up, the forests break and are mingled with the dust [when his army marcheth to a halting place] some of his advance guard may receive a share of water and of grass for their horses, but for none of his rear guard is there even sufficient mud.

"Citadels which have never bowed to anyone, when he advanceth all become dust, when the Lord of the world, Sher Shah, the sun of the universe attacketh them"¹.

Islam Shah also had, during his father's life-time 6,000 sawars as his Khasa Khails to whom he showed high favours after his accession. Those who were officers (*Girohdars*) in his *Khasa Khail* corps, were raised to the dignity of nobles of the Sur Empire and the others, who were merely *sawars*, were promoted to the posts of officers (*Girohdars*) in the royal *Khasa Khail*.² ①

Like the nobles of the Lodi period, the nobles of the Sur kings also had their *Khasa Khails*. Bhagwant, the slave of Khawwas Khan, was his supreme *Khasa Khail* whom the latter entrusted with the government of his maintenance *iqta*, the *sarkar* of Sirhind.³ Jhajhar Khan was one of the favourite *Khasa Khail* of Shuja'at Khan Sur in Malwa.⁴ Salim Khan, who was appointed the *Muqta* of the *Sarkars* of Chanderi and Raisin by Bazbahadur, was his (Baz Bahadur's) *Khasa Khail*. His other famous *Khasa Khail* whom

1. *Padmayati* Eng. tr. pp. 11-12.

2. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 71b.

3. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 90a.

4. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi* f. 98.

he raised to a high dignity after declaring his independence in Malwa was Taj Khan of non-descript origin.¹

The Sawars and the Value of their Service.

① Since the *sawars* (horsemen) were regarded as the most essential part of the army due to their mobility and swift speed on the battlefield, they were paid more handsomely than the foot-soldiers (*piyadas*). As the prices of good horses brought from Arabia, Iraq, Iran and Central Asia, which might be effectively used in a battle seem to have been very high; it was beyond the means of an ordinary foot-soldier to purchase a horse for his advancement.² If fortunately some person helped him to have a horse, he could raise his status.³ To be a *sawar* in those days was really a source of prestige among common people. ② But there also seem to have been individuals who had many horses with gorgeous trappings, and served under the high nobles if they could not secure a good job in the personal army of the Sultan. For instance, a Mughal named, Mamun had many horses with other requirements, and he could serve under any high noble who could attract him with handsome salary and allowances.⁴ But a careful study of the contemporary literature reveals that generally people in the army could not afford to purchase

1. *Akbarnama*, (N K.) pp. 150-6.

2. Generally a good horse maintained by the sultans and nobles cost from 4,000 to 10,000 tankahs. See *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 14a.

But the horses owned by the *sawars* appear to have been of a lower price than those of the sultans and the nobles. See *Anwar-ul-'uiyun*, Shaikh Abdul Quddus, Ahsan Press, Aligarh, 1905, p. 43.

Malik Muhammad Jaisi's statement that some of the horses of 'Arab and Iraqi breed were worth one lac rupees is very much exaggerated. *Madumalti*, Eng. tr. *op. cit*, p. 290.

3. Once a person, named Bakhtiyar got five hundred tankahs in charity from some wealthy person through the recommendation of Shaikh Abdul Haq (Chishti). Bakhtiyar was a soldier and was dismissed from the service for not having a horse. For this generous help he could afford to purchase a horse. *Anwar-ul-'uiyun*, p. 43.

4. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 31a.

costly horses.] Rizqullah Mushtaqi's account of a petty *sawar*, Jamal and his brother throws light on the economic conditions of the royal soldiers. Both the brothers were employed in the royal army, but they had only one horse; one of them rode the horse, while the other had to serve as a footman. One day Jamal gave the horse to a needy *salyid* by way of help when his brother was in the *diwan*. The latter, returning to his house, was greatly shocked at the misplaced charity of his brother who, however, consoled him.

دو گشت که یک کس سوار میشد و یکی پیاده می بود -
حالا هر دو پیاده شدیم - اگر خدای تعالی سوار میگر داند هر دو
را سوار خواهد کرد -

He said: one of us rode the horse and the other had to be *piyada*. Now both of us are *piyadas*. If God wants us to be *sawars*, he will make us so.

It rarely happened that the [sultan or high nobles] bestowed horses on their foot-soldiers as a reward. The former used to honour his nobles with the reward of horses and robes of honour (*khilat*) every year.² Likewise the nobles are also said to have given horses to their friends and those who were in their service as officers.³

As for the salary and monthly allowances of the *sawars*, our medieval authorities do not provide any information for the times of Bahlul and Sikander Lodi. Nizamuddin Bhakhshi, Shaikh Abdul Haq Dehlvi and Abdullah describe the prosperity of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi's reign. Abdullah also supplements this information by adding that Sultan Ibrahim Lodi fixed twenty-three *tankas* for the *sawar* and five *tankas* for footman as their monthly allowances.⁴ Likewise Mushtaqi says about the times of Sher Shah that a *sarwar* usually got

1. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 8a.

2. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 33b, 35a-b.

3. *Ibid.*, f. 40b.

4. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, *Tarikh-i-Haqqi*, Ms. Aligarh, ff. 48b-49a.
Tarikh-i-Daudi, pp. 104-105.

two *bidrahs* (8,000) as his monthly allowances.¹ According to Abdullah a *bidrah* was equal to twelve rupees.² But the references contained in the same anecdote in the *waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi* to the allowances of the *sawars* suggest that in certain cases the *sawars* could get more than two *bidrahs* as their monthly allowances. This makes it clear that a *sawar* could lead a comfortable life.

With the introduction of the *dagh* (horse branding) under Sher Shah, the prices of war-horses must have increased. Formerly the nobles did not maintain the required number of *sawars*, as will be subsequently discussed. J. J.

The Elephants

It appears from the study of the early Persian chronicles that the first sultans of Delhi never used elephants in their battles like the Rajput princes whom they destroyed with the help of their *sawars*. Sultan Balban appears to have been the first sultan who realised the effectiveness of elephants on the battlefield. He is reported to have said that an elephant was as effective as 500 *sawars*. But we do not find any reference to the employment of elephants in any battle fought till Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign. As a matter of fact it was the age of cavalry. The contemporary account shows that elephants were used either when the rival army was surrounded on all sides or the prisoners of war were ordered to be trampled under their feet.⁴ Their use after the traditions of the Rajputs could deprive the cavalry of its mobility which was regarded as a key to success. That is why Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq had only three thousand elephants, while his personal army consisted of lacs of *sawars*.⁵

1. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 51ab.

2. *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 135.

3. *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Barani, Bib. Ind. p. 53.

4. *Futuh-us-Salatin*, Isami, edited by Dr. Medhi Husan, Agra, 1938 p. 297.

5. *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Dr. Ishtiaq Husain Qureishi, 1944, p. 142.

The number of elephants in the royal army and in the contingents of the nobles seems to have increased with the accession of Sultan Firuz Shah, for he insisted on securing a supply of them every year from his vassals with their annual tribute.¹ It was during this time that the army of the Delhi Sultan began to lose its old grit, partly because of Firuz Shah's aversion to bloodshed and war, partly because of the absence of foreign invasions. He himself and his successors had to fight against the recalcitrant Hindu chieftains and rebel Muslim *Muqtas*, who were inferior to them in their resources, at least till 1492 A. D. when the death of Sultan Muhammad Shah, son of Firuz Shah was followed by a civil war and widespread anarchy. As a result of Firuz Shah's policy the military generals became ease-loving and began to count upon the force of their elephants more than the intrepid and well-trained *sawars*. They never seem to have cared for the proper disposition of the army and assigned a pivotal position to elephants in the battle array. This importance of elephants continued till the first half of the 15th century. The battle of Narila, fought between Sultan Muhammad Sharqi and Bahlul Lodi in 1452 A. D. throws light on the ineffectiveness of the elephants before the intrepid Afghan *sawars*, who were also expert in the art of archery. Qutb Khan Lodi caused dismay in the rank and file of the Sharqi army when he knocked down the most ferocious elephant of the Sharqi army with arrows.²

With the advent of the Lodis to sovereignty, the ideas about military strategy with regard to the use of elephants underwent a fast change. They not only revived the heroic traditions of the early Turkish *sawars* but also adopted new techniques of ambushing and surprise attacks on the enemy. They posted the ferocious war elephants in the centre around the Sultan or the commander-in-chief to make a solid block against the sudden attacks, and used them only for trampling

1. *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Afif, pp. 114, 161, 168-9, etc.

2. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, p. 144. Also *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 15.

the men of the enemy when there was no fear of their hampering the swiftness and mobility of their own *sawars*. Moreover, the commanders rode them on the battlefield to direct their followers easily, though they were exposed to the enemy and could be an easy target. ¹ The Surs also followed this tradition during the period of their rule². The only change introduced by Islam Shah was that he forbade his nobles and military generals to have war elephants or others even for riding with a view to destroying their fighting power. They could have only female elephants for carrying luggage³. ¹⁰

These elephants were covered with colourful Jhuls (coats), embroidered with gold and silver. The domed *howdahs* were placed upon their backs in which the spearmen and bowmen sat holding their spears and bows. ⁴ The elephants were given wine, so that they might be more ferocious on the battlefield due to intoxication. ⁵ Daisi says about their effectiveness: "if a multitude is in their path, they sweep it aside like leaves⁴." But the war elephants could be easily avoided by the soldiers and attacked from sides.

Infantry—

¹ The sultans and the nobles also maintained foot-soldiers in a considerable number⁵. The foot-soldiers were generally called

1. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 2b. 39b.
2. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Bib. Ind. V. II, pp. 36-7. *Akbarnama*, V. I, Bib. Ind. pp. 338.
3. *Badauni*, V. I, p. 384.
4. *Madumalti* Eng. tr. op. cit., pp. 298-9.
5. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, V. I, p. 329 for the foot-soldiers in the royal service. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, p. 203.

Ni'matullah says about the contingent of Jalal Khan Lodi, the *Muqta* of Kalpi :

دجلال خان لشکر خود را آراسته و لاله فوج ساخته یکی از سواران
و دیگری از فیلان و سومی از پیاده‌ها در سر راه استادان کرد تا بنظر
سلطان در آید —

Jalal Khan formed up his contingent in three parts as *sawars*, elephants and foot-men and drew them up by the road so that the Sultan (Sikandar Lodi) might see it".

piyada and belonged to the lower strata of the society. They were laced with swords, lances, bows and arrows. Some of them were deeply schooled in the art of archery in the service of the nobles. Babur also utilised their service by favouring their masters with ranks and important posts¹. (There is no definite information about the salary of the foot-soldiers for the Sur period, but it is probable that a footman got five rupees per month as in the times of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. Mushtaqi's statement that Iqbal Khan whom Islam Shah had degraded from the position of a noble to that of a *Piyada* (foot-man) got one rupee daily as his allowance is not correct. It was certainly the allowance fixed for a *sawar*. Iqbal Khan was originally a *sawar* and remained so after his degradation. But this statement may suggest that a *piyadah* could be raised to the rank of an *amir* if he proved himself a competent and able military man².)

Organization

It is wrongly held that the army became tribal and was attached to the nobles, instead of being under the direct control of the Sultan³. As a matter of fact the Lodi sultans had large standing armies under their personal command while the nobles had to maintain their contingents according to their rank and *iqta*s or cash allowances assigned by the sultan for the maintenance of their families and contingents⁴. (The Lodi sultans revived the old traditions and rules of the early sultans regarding the organization of the army. Though the available data is very meagre, yet it helps us to show that the Afghan army even under the Lodis was well-organized.)

The references contained in the Persian works indicate that there were different ranks to be conferred upon the nobles

1. *Baburnama* V, II, pp. 426, 539-9.

2. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi* f. 72b.

3. *Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, 1944, p. 155.

4. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi* f. 29b, for the payment of allowances to the nobles who were not assigned *iqta*s.

درد مردم سلطان ابراهیم و بعد او میدیدم که امرائے دین همت دروغ لباس خود ساخته بودند - بوقت قرار ماهیانه - لشکر می نمودند و چون جائیگر بدست ایشان می آید اکثر مردم سپاهی را حق نداده رخصت میکردند و اندک مردم ضروری را نگاه میدانستند و حق ایشان هم تمام نمی داد و از ابر شدن مردم صاحب و حرام خوردن ملاحظه نمیدانستند - مردم و اسب به تازان آورده می نمودند و زرپوش ایشان می ماند و مردم صاحب ضائع و ابرتر می شد¹ -

"I have often seen during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim (Lodi) that the dishonourable nobles practised dishonesty in showing their contingents for the settlement of their salaries. Having received *jagirs (iqta)*, they never paid their soldiers but dismissed them. They kept small numbers of *sawars* whom they did not pay sufficiently. They were disloyal and did not care if their master's expeditions ended in failure. They borrowed horses and men from others at the time of muster and thus accumulated gold and treasures but fled from the battle-field due to the shortage of soldiers, with the result that money remained with them while the work of their master suffered."

① Sher Shah was so particular about *dagh* that he personally got the troops of his nobles branded in his own presence and also fixed their allowances according to their merit². The nobles who remained with the king in attendance were paid from the royal exchequer, including the pay and allowances of their troopers³. Those who were entrusted with the administrative charge in different vilayets and *sarkars* were assigned *iqtas* according to the number of their *sawars* and footmen⁴. Everyone who came to pay a visit to the king or was summoned, used to bring all the files to show his account as well

having the files

1. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 112a.

2. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 51a-b, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 136.

3. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 51a.

4. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 89a. Also *Lataif-i-Quddusi*, p. 86.

as the number of the *sawars* maintained by him. Besides the horses branded by the imperial authorities, the *sawar* was also required to get his weapons and armour recorded in the registers, kept in the *diwan-i-arz*. Moreover, the *munsifs* (inspectors) were posted in all the frontier *sarkars* and *vilayets* to brand the horses of the nobles, and the king himself inspected the horses, weapons and other war apparatus whenever he happened to be in those territories. Rizq-allah Mushtaqi says :

در وقت د'غ هرکس از هر جامی آمد و یراق خود می نمود و
حساب میداد و بعضی افواج سرحد را بجهت داغ ملصفان
تعیین می فرمود و با وقتی خود نزدیک آن اطراف می رفت
د'غ میکرد. 1

"Every noble had to come from his place to show his troops and accounts at the time of muster. The *munsifs* were appointed to brand the horses in the frontier (territories). The king himself got them branded whenever he happened to be there."

Once some nobles came to Sher Shah to complain against Shuja'at Khan that he did not maintain the full contingent for saving money. But Shuja'at Khan was informed about it by his sons, Bayazid and Daulat Khan, who remained with the king as their father's representatives. Therefore, he at once hastened to the king (in Rajputana) to avoid the royal summons. He also brought 7,500 branded troopers and told the king that the remaining part of his contingent (of 12,000 *sawars*) was scattered in the *parganas* and would be summoned if ordered². Islam Shah also maintained the system of *dagh* after his father's death.

A few words may also be added here about the artillery, possessed by Sher Shah and Islam Shah. Since fire-arms came to be known for their effectiveness in the battle-field as well

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 50b.

2. *Tarik-i-Sher Shahi*, ff. 107a, 108a.

as for the defence of forts, Sher Shah paid due attention to the creation of a strong park of artillery. He also stocked the important forts at strategic points with canons and gun-powder. The guns used in the battle-field were fixed on wheeled carriages that were carried by bulls. "These carriages shone, all plated with gold."¹

The Martial Qualities of the Generals of the Afghan Period—

The advent of the Lodis as kings of Delhi was marked by the rise of intrepid generals and soldiers who were greater experts in the military tactics and strategy than those resourceful generals who served under the Sharqi sultans. As a result a few thousand *sawars* were enough to ravage and destroy the large Sharqi army at Narila in 1452 A.D.² This was not all. They revived the moribund Sultanate of Delhi, and also restored its lost glory after a long time. The deeds of bravery performed by the sultans and their nobles show the martial abilities and the genius of the war captains and also those who served under them. The premier generals who are worth mentioning, were Qutb Khan Lodi, son of Islam Khan Lodi, Khan-i-Jahan Lodi, son of Firuz Khan, Bahlul's second uncle, Tatar Khan Yusuf Khail, Mubarak Khan Nuhani, Shaikh Said Farmuli, Mian Gadai Farmuli, Khan-i-Azam Umar Khan Sarwani, Masnad-i-ali Dariya Khan Nuhani,

1. *Madumalti*, Eng. tr. p. 295.

It must be remembered that Sher Shah started using canons even before his final victory over the Mughals. Jauhar's description of the siege of Chunar by Hamayun in 1537 shows that within a short time Sher Shah's men were adept in the art of handling the guns and canons.

Cf. *Sher Shah and His Times*, pp. 179-177.

2. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, p. 144.

According to Rizqullah, Mushtaqi Bahlul won a victory over the army of Sultan Mahmud Sharqi consisting of 30,000 *sawars* with the help of seven *sawars* at Narila as already discussed in one of the preceding chapters.

Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi, f. 5b.

Masnad-i-'ali Husain Farmuli, Jamal Khan Sarang Khan and Masnad-i-'ali Khawwas Khan, the father of famous Mian Bhuq. Qutb Khan Lodi and Khan-i-Jahan Lodi died during Sultan Bahlul's life-time after having rendered important service to the Sultan, while Tatar Khan Yusuf Khail was destroyed by Prince Nizam Khan (later Sultan Sikandar) for his rebellion during the last years of Bahlul's reign in 1485 A.D.¹ The other nobles survived Sultan Bahlul for long. Let us now assess their achievements.

Shaikh Said Farmuli, Mian Gada'i Farmuli, Khan-i-Khanan Farmuli, Khan-i-Azam Umar Khan Sarwani and Mian Muhammad Farmuli succeeded in attaining to high ranks and offices during Bahlul's reign due to their abilities and prowess. The guidance and directions they gave to their men in the above-mentioned battle which was fought against Tatar Khan Yusuf Khail, far superior army in number show their first rate generalship. Likewise Umar Khan Sarwani again showed unprecedented chivalry in the battle against Sultan Husain Sharqi (1495 A.D.), who was invited from Bihar by the rebel *zamindars* of Jaunpur, Awadh and other eastern *Sarkars*. Though Sultan Husain had lacs of *sawars* and footmen with ferocious war elephants, Khan-i-Azam Umar Khan Sarwani, who held the command of the advanced guard, took the enemy by surprise by launching an attack near the strong fort of Chaund without waiting for the arrival of the main army. He directed his followers from the back of an elephant so successfully that he overcame and routed the Sharqi army with his small following. The victory won by him was due largely to his undaunted courage and swift movement.²

Masnad-i-'ali Mian Muhammad Farmuli, known as Kalapahar—

He had been the *Muqta* of the *sarkar* of Awadh since the time of Sultan Bahlul. As there were powerful *Rais* and

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 9b-40a.

2. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 12b. Khan-i-Azam Umar Khan Sarwani died during the early years of Sultan Sikandar's reign. See *Lataifi Qudusi*, p. 39.

zamindars loyal to Sultan Husain Sharqi, twenty-four of them joined hands against *Masnad-i-ali* Mian Muhammad Farmuli and proceeded to drive him away from Awadh. The *Masnad-i-ali* also came out to fight, but before giving battle to them, he divided his army into three parts, the right wing, centre and the left wing. The command of the centre was entrusted to Mian Ni'matullah, of the right to Malik Allahdad Qanaui and of the left to Qayam Khan Panni. The *Masnad-i-ali* kept only 120 *sawars*, one elephant and one drum with him and then ordered all the three commanders to march on. He himself sat down to play chess. After some time he was informed that the battle had started between the rival armies, but he remained unmoved and continued playing chess. The servant again came with the news that the right and left wings of his army had been routed, while Nimat Ullah was standing firm. Then Mian Muhammad said :

”چون نصرت اله بجای خود است اینجا کجا روند“

Since Nimatullah stands firm in his place, why should I go there.

Any way he remained busy with the game. At last the news came that the fugitive men of the right and left wings had returned to the battlefield and joined Nimatullah. The *Masnad-i-ali*, therefore, stopped the game and at once prepared to march to the battlefield. First he got the drum beaten and then ordered his men to run towards the battlefield shouting aloud that Mian Muhammad was coming. His name caused such dismay among the Rajas that they fled away leaving much booty¹.

The other notable battle was fought during Sultan Sikandar's reign. This was against Shams Khan, Sultan Husain Sharqi's *Muqta* of Bahraich (1496 A.D.)

It is said that some nobles pointed out to Sultan Sikandar in Bhatta (Bundelkhund) that there was left no noble of Sultan Husain anywhere but Shams Khan still held the *sarkar* of Bahraich. They also suggested to the Sultan that some of

1. *Wajit-at-i-Mushtaq*, ff. 39L-40a.

them should be deputed against him. The Sultan kept quiet, but Khan-i-Khanan Farmuli took it as a reflection on his relation, Mian Muhammad Farmuli, and at once informed him about the matter. Thereupon Mian Muhammad Farmuli called his officers and told them that he wanted to cross the Gogra at once to fight against Shams Khan. His officers agreed with him and also assured him of their full support. After this he called all the soldiers and officers, spread a sheet of white cloth, kept betel leaves on it and loudly said: "I shall tie this coffin to my head. Everybody who prefers death should accompany me, and those who like otherwise should pick up betel leaves, bid me farewell and I shall be happy with them. In spite of this if someone turns traitor on the battlefield, it will not be becoming on his part." But all his men showed willingness to fight against Shams Khan and accompanied him. Having reached the bank of the Gogra, he again said to all of his followers: "I am stepping into the boat and whosoever likes should accompany me. I won't compel anybody." Being assured of their whole-hearted support, he ordered them to occupy the boats. He himself set off after them, leaving the horses on the bank, for the river was not fordable.

Meanwhile Shams Khan was also informed about the march of Mian Muhammad and arrived at the other bank of the river to prevent him to cross the river. Since the men of Shams Khan were not expert in the art of archery, they prepared to fight against the enemy with their swords. Knowing their intentions, Mian Muhammad rushed towards his men and ordered them to use arrow and bow instead of sword. As his men began to rain arrows on the rival army, confusion was caused in its rank and file. By chance an arrow wounded Shams Khan so seriously that he fell down and his men took to heel in consequence¹.

Every year Mian Muhammad Farmuli used to spend three months on hunting where his men followed him. The tigers,

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 39-b.

at a time when he himself was in his wolves and other wild animals. He believed the information about the allowed to go for a tiger except he was, in the sight of the grace- his left hand was fractured, he fled away when the *Masnad-i-* bow and arrow with the help of his men fought bravely and thus used to hold the arrow in his fractured hand. Shaikh Daud Kambo, a bow keeping it on his chest with the help of the shoes of Raja's men in hunting on the part of the Mian also threw them into the fire. others in his service active and well disciplined. thousand coins¹. The

Masnad-i-ali Dariya Khan Nuhani— victory that he assigned

Masnad-i-ali Dariya Khan Nuhani was *id-i-ali* in reward.

of the *Muqta* of Bihar by Sultan Sikandar bin Farmuli was a proved himself a successful military general in which he displeased Sultan had fought since the closing years of his father's reign (1509 A.D.) The first battle in which he impressed Prince Nizam-ud-din Saran (later Sultan Sikandar) was fought against Tatar Khan Ya'qub and Khail, already mentioned. Since then he had remained with the Prince and became one of his confident nobles after his accession to the throne in 1489 A.D. In 1495 A.D. he was entrusted with the government of the vilayet of Bihar where he performed glorious deeds of bravery in its defence². It is said that soon after his posting there, twenty-two Sharqi nobles and Rajas who had owned allegiance to the Lodi Sultan, turned rebel and fomented trouble in the eastern territories. Though there were many nobles in that region, yet none of them showed courage by coming to grips with them. At last Jamal Khan Sarang Khani the *Muqta* of the vilayet of Jaunpur and Dariya Khan Nuhani decided to measure swords with them. As the Sharqi nobles and Rajas were far inferior to them in military tactics they were easily overcome in spite of their overwhelming army. Shortly afterwards Sultan Husain Sharqi also came to Bihar with the support of the Sultan of Bengal and the *zamindars* of Bihar, but Dariya Khan did not lose courage and rose equal to the situation. He engaged the enemy in the open field, passed the night there and retreated to the fort on the

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 40a.

2. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 32. Also *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 110, 111.

them should be deputed against him. Husain Sharqi hastened to the fort but Khan-i-Khanan Farmuli took its fort. To reduce the power relation, Mian Muhammad Far Khan broke the wall of the fort about the matter. Thereupon Husain assaulted it and re-entered called his officers and told enemy. He continued fighting in Gogra at once to fight against. Sultan Husain Sharqi was dead with him and also said "What type of man is Dariya Khan this he called all that means to pull out a single brick from white cloth, kept by himself breaks the wall of the fort, comes out of this coffin to be 500 kos away from him." Thereafter, the should accompany came from the centre and Sultan Husain fled pick up betel

them. In more, on Sultan Sikandars's death, the Sultan fled, and the Raja of Orissa attacked the vilayet of Bihar on their respective sides. Dariya Khan said to his men. "It does not matter if the Sultan is dead. - I am still alive and the same man as before." Then he ordered them to pitch their tents, one facing the army of Bengal and the other on the side of Orissa. When this was known to the enemies they gave the intention of fighting against Dariya Khan.¹

Masnad-i-ali Mian Husain Farmuli Known as Jalkhet—

Formerly Mian Husain was a *sawar* in the service of Sultan Bahlul, but he got the rank of a military officer after some time by sheer dint of ability. He was an officer when he fought against Tatar Khan Yusuf Khail under the command of Prince Nizam Khan.² In 1495 A.D. he was entrusted with the charge of the *sarkar* of Saran where he proved himself a talented man of initiative. Soon after his appointment in the new capacity of *Muqta* he advanced against the Raja of Champaran, who was not willing to accept the suzerainty of his master. He said that the Raja was free from all anxiety about the invader crossing the river Gandak. But all of a sudden confusion

1. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, I, 41b.

2. *Vide Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, II. 9b-10a.

broke out in his city, at a time when he himself was in his dancing hall. He did not believe the information about the arrival of the enemy, lost, as he was, in the sight of the graceful dancing girls. He, however, fled away when the *Masnad-i-ali* stormed his palace while his men fought bravely and thus sacrificed their lives. Thereupon Shaikh Daud Kambo, a *Shiqdar* under Mian Husain collected the shoes of Raja's men who had fallen in the battle and threw them into the fire. They yielded gold valued at twenty thousand coins¹. The Sultan was so much pleased by this victory that he assigned the *sakar* of Champaran also to the *Masnad-i-ali* in reward.

It is also worthy of note that Mian Husain Farmuli was a short-tempered and arrogant man. First he displeased Sultan Sikandar during the last years of his reign (1509 A.D.) and also fled away to Bengal when Haji Sarang reached Saran against him². On his death he returned to Agra and succeeded in winning Sultan Ibrahim's confidence. But he became hostile to the new Sultan also when he was ordered to fight against Rana Sanga under the command of Mian Makkhan, a mere upstart. He caused a tremendous loss to Sultan's army by his desertion to the Rana³. Later he quarrelled with the Rana, made a surprise attack on his camp and the latter fled away with severe wounds. Puffed up by this glorious victory, he came back to Sultan Ibrahim, who assigned him the *sarkar* of Chanderi⁴. But the Sultan did not know to pardon the rebels. He conspired with the Shaikhzadas of Chanderi against his life. Though Mian Husain Farmuli got an inkling of the conspiracy, he did not take it seriously. He said to his relations :

"If I spit on them they will die by its force. You will see what is to happen." But the Shaikhzadas surrounded his house that very night and killed him⁵.

1. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f- 41a-b.

2. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 333.

3. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 62a-b,

4. *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, Ahmad Yadgar, *Bib. Ind* pp. 82-3.

5. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 64b-65a.

Similarly the gallant deeds and achievements of *Masnad-i-ali* Khawwas Khan, the wazir of Sultan Sikandar and the father of famous Mian Bhuva and *Masnad-i-ali* Azam Humayun Sarwani are by no means less important. The former enjoyed Sikandar's confidence to such an extent that the latter entrusted him with the charge of important territories and military expeditions.¹ But great credit is due to Khawwas Khan for his conquest of the mountainous and impregnable fort of Nagarkot (in the Punjab) where he also established *Ulama* and scholars.² As far as *Masnad-i-ali* Azam Humayun Sarwani is concerned, he seized the extensive territory of the Raja of Bhatta (modern Bundelkhand) who had gained tremendous power and was hostile to the Lodi Sultan. He also reduced him to the position of a petty *zamindar*, always obedient to the crown of Delhi.³ Furthermore, he expanded the vilayet of Kara and Manikpur in its south upto the fort of Kalinjar and also invested it, but the sudden death of Sultan Sikandar upset his programme, because he raised the siege to support the cause of Prince Jalal Khan against Sultan Ibrahim.⁴

Some of the aforesaid nobles died a natural death while others were destroyed by Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, who was suspicious of their loyalty. Since Sultan Ibrahim Lodi was brought up under the traditions of his father and grandfather, he was an able military commander as his victory over Prince Alam Khan shows.⁵ But most of the nobles created by him were

1. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, pp. 373-4.

2. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 32b-33a. In 1361 A. D. Sultan Firuz Shah also invested this fort and the account of *Afif* shows that even the high *munjaniqs* failed to knock down the Raja. But after a few days the Raja was forced to sue for peace due to the shortage of food. See *Afif* p. 188.

3. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 19b-20b. Also *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, translated by Pro. Nirod Bhushan Rai for contemporary Sanskrit Works.

4. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 347. Also *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, p. 236.

5. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, V. II. p. 6. Also *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, pp. 256-6.

only upstarts having no military experience¹. But it is true that if the battle of Panipat had not come in his way he would have succeeded in giving them proper training.

The most important generals of Sher Shah who predominated the political scene after the expulsion of the Mughals in 1540 A.D. were Qutb Khan naib, Khawwas Khan, son of Sukha, the slave of Farid (later Sher Shah), Azam Humayun Niazi, Shuja'at Khan, Jalal Khan, son of Jilo Sur, Sarmast Khan, the younger brother of Jalal Khan Jilo, Ghazi Khan Sur, Barmazid Kaur², and Haji Khan, the brother-in-law of Khawwas Khan. With their loyal support Sher Shah defeated his rivals, and established a reputation of invincibility for his arms. He established an Empire, the splendour of which caught the imagination of the contemporaries as well as of the posterity. The achievements of Sher Shah and his nobles in various fields-cultural, administrative and military-have been described at some length elsewhere³.

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 60a. *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, (Aligarh Text) pp. 92-4.

Mian Makkhan, who was entrusted with the supreme command of the army deputed against Rana Sanga in 1523 A. D. in preference to *Masnad-i-ali* Husain Farmuli and other respected nobles, did not know anything even about the proper division of the army. As a result of it he miserably failed in directing his men to check the onslaught of the Rajputs in the battle-field and retreated after having suffered a great loss.

2. It is generally presumed that Barmazid Kaur was a Hindu general but according to Badauni he was a one-eyed Musalman general, who was known for his violence and cruelty. Badauni says :

”بہر مزید کور کہ د جال این امت و حجاج دورگار خود بود“

‘Barmazid Kaur (one eyed) was the anti-christ for his generation and Hajjaj (the cruel Ommayyid officer) for his time.’ Badauni, V. I, *Bib. Ind.* p. 397.

As a matter of fact the scholars have wrongly read Kaur as Gaur.

3. I have dealt with the life and achievements of Sher Shah and his generals in my monograph, ‘*Sher Shah*’ which is in press.

Chapter VI

Agrarian System

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AGRARIAN SYSTEM

[The agrarian system of the Afghans—the Lodis and the Surs requires a critical study.] There are a number of complicated problems connected with it, which have not been solved so far. [If the information available in chronicles is scrutinized in the light of authentic references contained in the contemporary hagiological literature to the social environment, some useful conclusions may be arrived at.] In fact, the Lodi and Sur kings brought about conditions conducive to the progress of agriculture, development of industry and growth of trade and commerce by establishing peace and security.

In a general way, the economy of the Lodi and the Sur empires was basically agricultural. The entire administrative system largely depended on the state share in the surplus of agricultural production collected from the peasants. Thus the progress of agriculture always led to the augmentation of the state income. There was abundance of land in medieval India which could be brought under the plough only if the peasants expected to enjoy the fruits of their toil. A little oppression of the peasants by the state officers did much harm to the state interest, for the dissatisfied farmers could not take interest in cultivation. Therefore, the Afghan kings seem to have made all possible efforts to protect the peasants from the tyranny of their officers. Though they patterned their administrative system on the traditions of the early Sultans, they also introduced important changes in it whenever necessary. ①

Revenue Units

① The village (*mauza*) was the lowest revenue unit in the Sultanate. Its administration was carried on the ancient tradi-

tional line (the *muqaddams*, *zamindars*¹, *chaudhris* and *ra'is*—the hereditary chiefs of the villages—were accountable before the *pargana* officers for the administration of their villages. Being the intermediaries between the state and the peasantry they rendered important services to both the parties. They were expected to safeguard the interests of the peasants on the one hand and facilitate the work of the government revenue officials on the other. Sometimes they flogged the villagers if

1. The *muqaddam* and *zamindar* are regarded as synonyms. The first mention of *zamindars* is found in Barani's account of the reign of Firuz Shah. The writer seems to have implied that they were the hereditary chiefs of the villages. They usually had one or two villages. Barani, p. 539; Also Afif, p. 112.

However, the *zamindar* or *muqaddam* had to collect the state dues of revenue from the peasants of his village and paid it to the state officials after having deducted his own share. They enjoyed the same position during the Afghan period also. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 26b-27a.

As regards the *chaudhri*, he appears to have been the chief of a number of villages in a *pargana*. Our contemporary Indian chroniclers do not explain the difference between the position of the *chaudhri* and the *muqaddam*. It is only Ibn Battuta, who says: "The '*Sadi*' in India is a collection of a hundred villages, and the territories dependent upon a city are divided into *sadis* each of which is under a *chaudhri*, the latter being the chief of the local infidels and a *mutasarrif*—an officer charged with collecting taxes." Ibn Battuta, Eng. tr. by Mahdi Husain p. 123.

Dr. Ishkiag Husain Quraishi doubts the authenticity of Battuta's statement. He says: "The term *sadi* does not seem to have been officially adopted which would explain its absence from contemporary chronicles." *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, second edition, 1944, pp. 203-4.

The relevant evidence contained in the *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* indicates that the *qasha* signified the head-quarters of a group of villages and by it as a territorial jurisdiction comprising these villages. Every *qasha* had about a hundred villages with many *chaudhries*.

Ibn Battuta also contradicts himself at the same place when he calls the *qasha* of Inderpat as the *sadi* of Hindpat. As a matter of fact the *qasha* of Inderpat was an administrative unit like other

there was delay in the payment of taxes.¹ But they seldom seem to have lost their grip over the mind of the villagers. They commanded respect and had such influence over them that the latter sided with them at the time of armed conflict between the village chief and the state officers.²

① The zamindars or hereditary chiefs can be classified into three broad categories: (a) the autonomous ra'is (chieftains), (b) the chaudhris (the big zamindars having zamindari or proprietary rights over a number of villages) and (c) the khut and muqaddams (petty landlords). But it must be stated that the villages held by these zamindars were not separate from the Khalsa or the iqta's of the nobles. Every village had either muqaddam or chaudhri as an intermediary between the muqta or Khalisa Amil and the peasantry. ⑦

① They constituted a hereditary landed aristocracy in India. The surplus of agricultural production, collected from the peasants, was shared between them and the state. The muqtas and the Khalsa officers leaned heavily on their support in the administration of the villages. The dissatisfied muqaddams and chaudhris could create difficulties for the nobles and the Sultans.³ However, they played a vital role in the political, economic and social field. Their association with the royal court made it possible for them to adopt the culture of the nobles of the Sultanate.⁴ Thus they also contributed to the cultural integration between the urban and the rural people.

① The nature of zamindari rights in land also needs some discussion. It comprised land both under abadi (habitation) and cultivation. The zamindars possessed lands both self-

1. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, ii/805.

2. *Waq'iat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 68a.

Mushtaqi refers to a rebel muqaddam of a certain village in the sarkar of Biyana, against whom the military expedition was led by the order of Ahmad Khan Jilwani, the muqta of the sarkar. Finding himself unable to meet the situation, the muqaddam decided to flee to the jungles with all the villagers.

3. *Waq'iat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 68 a-b; *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, i/179

4. *Waq'iat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 38a, 63a-b.

cultivated and those rented out to the tenants for cultivation. These rights could be disposed of by the *zamindar* at any time he desired as the available documents related to sale-deeds during the Sur period show. The evidence contained in the '*Tarikh-i-Sher-Shahi*' reveals that these rights could also be lost by the contumacy of the zamindars against the state. In such cases the rebel *zamindars* were destroyed and new *zamindars* were created. Mushtaqi's testimony to this fact is of considerable significance. According to him Hemu destroyed many *muqaddams* in certain *parganas* of Rewari and established people of his own caste as new *zamindars* in their place.¹ Likewise, one could acquire *zamindari* rights by cleaning jungles and bringing the new land under cultivation. On the fall of the Lodi Empire, the Sarwani nobles are reported to have established villages in the *sarkar* of kol as they had been thrown out of job and could survive by taking to some new profession.² The villages, fifty, hundred or more than hundred, were grouped together in *parganas*³ for administrative facilities. The *muqaddams*, *zamindars* and *chaudhris* were thus put under

1. Documents nos. 4, 5 and 6 as calendared by Dr. Irfan Habib, *The Indian Economic and Social History Reviews*, Vol. IV, Sept. 1967, New Delhi, pp. 222-230. These documents are related to sale-deeds and dated 1542, 1545 and 1550. They are available in the Library of the History department, the Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

2. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi* f. 8

3. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 74a.

Abul Fazl's references to the *zamindars* in certain *parganas* of the *sarkar* of Rewari in the *Ain* corroborate Mushtaqi.

4. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 102b, 103a.

5. The term *pargana* as an administrative unit appears for the first time in Afif's *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Afif, p. 99. For the Lodi period, Mushtaqi says :

در هر پیر گله مثلاً پنجاه یا صد دیه اند

For instance, there are fifty or hundred villages in every *pargana*.
Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi, f. 32.

Babur also throws light on the composition of *parganas* when he says that one *pargana* yielded one crore and sixty lac *tanakas* revenue in the *iqta* of Azam Humayun Sarwani. *Baburnama*, ii/537.

the charge of the *pargana* officers) called by different denominational names. (They were *muqta*, *wajahdar* and *shiqdar*,) who differed from each other in the nature of their position. They were supreme officers at the *pargana* level, combining in themselves the office of the executive as well as military officer. Below them were certain other revenue and civil officials to work under them. The supreme *pargana* officers whom the Sultan appointed in the *Khalsa parganas* as incharge of administration—civil as well as military—were called *shiqdars*, and most of them held the rank and title of *malik*. Those high nobles, who were assigned the revenue of *pargana* or *parganas* by the Sultan instead of cash salary for the maintenance of their families and military contingents, were called *wajahdars* and *muqtas*.

Shiqdar and Shiqdari :

The *shiqdar* appears to have continued as the head of *pargana* administration since long. Barani refers to *shiqdar* for the first time in his account of Sultan Ala al-Din Khalji's reign, and complains against their corruption and high-handedness.¹ But nothing is gleaned from this reference about his position. At another place he mentions *shiqdars* with *faujdar*s in connection with the rebellion of the village headmen, caused by the increase in land taxation during Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign.² Dr. Ishtiaq Husain Quraishi considers the *shiqdar* as the administrator of *shiqq* instead of *pargana*, ignoring outright the existence of *faujdar*s.³

According to the author of the *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, the *faujdar* was an important noble, holding *shiqq* under his charge and also combined in himself the office of an army commander and executive officer.⁴ Other reliable evidence shows that the *shiqdar* was posted either in a *Khalsa pargana* or in an important city, the dependencies of which were assigned to the

1. Barani, p. 337.

2. Ibid., p. 497.

3. *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, p. 202.

4. *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, p. 175.

nobles as maintenance-*iqtas*.¹ He worked there both in the capacity of a military commander and a supreme executive officer.

During the Afghan period the *shiqdar* enjoyed the same position. Sultan Bahlul is reported to have appointed *shiqdars* in the conquered *parganas* of Kampil, Patiali, Shamsabad, Saket, Jalesar and Kol in 1479. These appointments show that the above mentioned *parganas* were reserved by the Sultan for *Khalsa*, for nobles to whom *parganas* were assigned as maintenance-*iqtas*, were called *wajahdar* or *muqtas*. Likewise, Sultan Sikandar Lodi appointed Mian zaitum (Afghan) as the *shiqdar* of the newly-founded capital, Agra². Formerly Agra was a part of the *sarkar* of Biyana, but Sultan Sikandar had separated nine *parganas* from it to include in the new *sarkar* of Agra. Mian Zaitun looked after the administration of the city of Agra because its *parganas* were held by other nobles as their maintenance-*iqtas*. Moreover, the evidence available shows that the *shiqdar* appointed in a big and important *pargana* of *Khalsa* was a high noble. The *farman* of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi reveals the fact that the big *pargana* of Sandila was reserved for *Khalsa* and its revenue and civil administration was entrusted to the charge of Malik Abul Fath.³ Hamid Khan, the *Khalsa*

1. Afif pp. 117-118.

Firuz Shah appointed a *shiqdar* in the city of Hisar Firuza, which he had founded and made the capital-city of a *shiqq*, instead of Hansi. As the *parganas* of Hansi were held by the nobles as their maintenance-*iqtas*, the noble of the status of a *shiqdar* could be appointed in Hisar Firuza. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, i/310.

Also the verses of Kabir found in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, as translated in *The Sikh Religion* by M. A. Macauliffe (1909) vi/227-8.

2. *Waqi'at-i Mushtaqi*, ff. 14a-b.

Also *Evolution of the Vilayet, the shiqq and the Sarkar*, Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi, *Medieval India Quarterly*, 1963, Vol. V, pp. 14-28.

3. The *Farman* of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, dated 927 A.H., published in the 'Proceedings of the Idara-i-Maarif-i-Islamia', Second session, Lahore 1936, pp. 283-4.

"It is a *sanad* of land-grant. The upper portion is written in *nastaliq*, the lower portion transliterates the Persian text in Hindi script."

Khail, also held the city of Hisar Firuza as *shiqdar* in 1526 A.D.¹ Similarly, Malik Muhammad, son of Umar, was the *shiqdar* of the city of Kol, the headquarter of a *sarkar*.²

As the *parganas* attached to it were assigned to the nobles, the city of Kol was reserved to be administered by the *shiqdar*, an agent of the *diwan-i-ala*. Now it is evident that like Firuz Shah and others, the Lodi Sultans also reserved important cities to be governed through *shiqdars*, the agents of the *diwan-i-ala*.

Duties of the Shiqdars and their Subordinates—

The duties of the *shiqdars* were manifold. They were not only responsible for the maintenance of peace and order but also helped the revenue collectors (*amils*) in collecting revenue in their respective *parganas*. They sent military help to the *amils*, if required, against the rebel *muqaddams* or *zamindars*.³ Besides, it was also a part of their duty to look after the land-grants (called *wajah-i-ma'ash*, *imlak* or *wazaif*)⁴ assigned to the *ulama*, *saiyids* and other saintly persons, for the *amils* could deprive them of their right. (In short, the *shiqdar* discharged the duties of both the civil and military officer at the *pargana* level)

The nobles appointed in the large *parganas* as *shiqdars* were high officers holding the rank of *malik*. They appear to have been assigned a quite good percentage of revenue collected in *parganas* for the maintenance of their troops.⁵

1. *Baburnama*, (Turki text) p. 262a. It appears that most of the *pargana* of the *sarkar* of Hisar Firuza were assigned to the nobles, who turned hostile to Sultan Ibrahim Lodi during the last years of his reign. The city of Hisar Firuza with its dependencies was under Hamid Khan *shiqdar* and other military officers of the royal army—consisting of more than 4,000 *sawars*.

2. *The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions*, pp. 2-3.

It must be remembered that the large *iqta* of Ilyas Khan Turk-bacha was in the *sarkar* of Kol. *Waqlat-i Mushtaqi*, f. 44a,

3. *Waqlat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 67a-68a.

4. *Ibid.*, f. 11b; also *Maktubat-i-Quddusi*, letter 119, p. 236.

5. There is no evidence available in any contemporary work to show the share of the *shiqdar* in the revenue of his *pargana* during the Afghan

The subordinate officers posted in the *pargana* under *shiqdars* were *amils*, *amins* and *qazis* the latter being a judicial officer. The office of the *qazi* still appears to have been an important court of justice in the towns.¹

But the *qazi* was concerned with civil suits, while the criminal cases were decided by the *shiqdars*. Sometimes the *amil* and *chaudhri* were also authorized by the *shiqdar* to deal with the wrong-doers, if he was busy with some other work.²

Like the *shiqdars*, the *amils* were appointed in the *Khalsa parganas* by the Sultans. The corroborative evidence contained in the *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi* reveals that Sultan Sikandar Lodi never transferred the *amils* whom he once appointed in the *parganas*.³ They were also charged with important duties. Apart from being revenue collectors, they also took precautionary measures to save the cultivated lands from the natural calamities. They constructed and repaired embankments during the rainy season.⁴ As regards *amin*, he seems to have been appointed in *parganas* to measure the land under cultivation either for determining the state demand of land revenue or knowing the exact yield (*jama*) of a *pargana* or an *iqta*.⁵

The *muqaddams*, *zamindars* and the *pargana* officials seem to have retained their respective positions during the Sur period also. But the reforms introduced by Sher Shah and Islam Shah curtailed their power. These important measures were adopted

(Continued from the previous page)

period. But the earlier evidence contained in the *Rehla* of Ibn Battuta reveals that he got a specific portion of the revenue.

1. *Mukrubat-i-Quddusi*, letter 43, p. 59.
2. *Lataif-i-Quddusi*, p. 35.

By the time of the Lodis, the Muslims also started acquiring *zamindari* rights in the land. The *chaudhri* mentioned by Shaikh Rukn al-Din was a Muslim, who might have either purchased the villages or was a descendant of some convert *zamindar*.

3. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 11b.
4. *Lataif-i-Quddusi*, p. 67.
4. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 26b-27a.

to prevent them from oppressing the peasants. They could not exact more than the actual state share of the surplus on the basis of wrong speculation. To safeguard the interest of the peasants the *amins* were employed for measuring the land under cultivation every year. Because the state share of land revenue was fixed on the basis of measurement, the *muqaddams* and *amils* could not resort to dishonest means.¹

As the *muqaddams* were charged with the duty of establishing peace and order within the limits of their villages, they were forced to be careful not to incur the royal displeasure. Abbas Khan says : "*muqaddams* took every care in guarding the boundaries of their villages throughout the period of Sher Shah and Islam Shah. They saw to it that the thieves and highwaymen or their enemies did not harm the travellers, for it could result in their humiliation and death."²

Like the Lodis, Sher Shah appointed a *shiqdar* in every *Khalsa pargana*³ as well as in the cities, the headquarters of the *sarkars*, the dependencies of which were assigned to the nobles as *iqtas*.⁴ The *shiqdars* governed the *parganas* and cities

1. *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 213.

2. *Tarikh-i-Sher-Shahi* f. 113a.

3. *Waqiat-i-Mushtoqi*, f. 50b.

The author says that there were only thirteen hundred thousand *parganas* in the Sur empire and Sher Shah appointed a *shiqdar* in everyone of them. Here the author refers to the *parganas* of *Khalsa*, for the nobles to whom the *parganas* were assigned as maintenance-*iqtas* appointed their own men as *shiqdars* and *amils*. But Abdullah says that Sher Shah had reserved a hundred thousand and thirty *parganas* for *Khalsa* and appointed a *shiqdar* in every *pargana* for its administration. *Tarikh-i Daudi*, p. 130.

4. Parak Niazi was appointed by Sher Shah as the *shiqdar* of the city of Qanauj and the area included in its *pargana*. As regards other *parganas* in the *sarkar* of Qanauj, they seem to have been assigned to the nobles because *Masnad-i-ali* Maruf Farmuli and his son and successor, Shah Muhammad Farmuli held a large *iqta* there since the times of the Lodis.

Abbas Khan says about Parak Niazi that he cleaned all the area of the robbers and highwaymen. No body could have the courage to do anything against his wishes. *Tarikh-i Sher Shahi*, f. 115a.

entrusted to their charge, successfully suppressed the turbulent people and dispensed justice to all without any discrimination. To make the *shiqdar* more active in suppressing the criminals, Islam Shah held him responsible like the *muqdam* for every crime committed within his jurisdiction as already mentioned.]

[The number of the subordinate officers who worked under the *shiqdars* appears to have increased to some extent during the Sur period. As the system of crop-sharing was abolished and the method of measurement was enforced, an *amin* was posted in every *pargana* to measure the land under cultivation every year. Formerly the *amin* does not seem to have been posted in every *pargana* as the cultivated land was not measured every year. It was occasionally measured either on the desire of the peasants or when the *sultan* wanted to ascertain the correct yield of any *iqta* as previously stated. Besides one *kharazanadar* (treasurer), one *munsif-i-khazana* (treasury inspector), two clerks—one persian writer and the other Hindi writer—also worked in the *pargana*.¹ They kept the records of the cultivated land as well as of the produce and helped both the *amil* and *muqadams*. In addition to them, the *qanungo* is also mentioned as charged with the duty of maintaining the revenue papers on the basis of which they helped the revenue collectors (*amils*) by providing them with information about the revenue collection in the previous years. They also speculated about the coming year.² It may also be stated that Sher Shah began to change the *amils* after every two years against the traditions of Sultan Sikandar, for the post of *amil* was very lucrative and the king wanted as many of his servants to benefit as possible.³]

[Abbas Khan Sarwani attributed the establishment of this administrative system to Sher Shah.] But the scarce material which we have at our disposal shows that not only the Surs

1. *Ibid.*, f. 113a. *Mushtaqi* refers to *munsif* instead of *amin*. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 50b. *Tarikh-i Daudi*, p. 213.

2. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 50b; *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 113a.

3. *Ibid.*, 11a.

4. *Ibid.*, f. 114a.

but even the Lodis allowed all the administrative institutions they found in the working order to continue, for they had developed in an evolutionary process. [It was not easy for Sher Shah to lay down the foundation of so many new institutions within the short period of his reign. Moreover, he spent most of his time in leading military expeditions for new conquests. The posts of the *shiqdar*, *amil*, and *amin* were age-old while *fautadar* or *khazanchi* and *qanungo* were always an indispensable part of the administration whose services could not be ignored in any reign. But Sher Shah appointed *munsif-i-khazana* and *karkuns* probably for the first time to expedite the work of administration. The introduction of the new reforms and regulations actually set the state machinery on a sound footing and all the abuses, which had crept into it after the death of Sultan Sikandar and grown forceful under the Mughals, were put an end to.]

The names of the various *pargana* officials under Surs, as given in different texts, can be tabulated as follows :

<i>Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi</i>	<i>Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi</i>	<i>Tarikh-i-Daudi</i>
1. <i>Shiqdar</i>	1. <i>Shiqdar</i>	1. <i>Shiqdar</i>
2. <i>Munsif</i>	2. <i>Amil</i>	2. <i>Khazanchi</i>
3. <i>Khazanadar</i>	3. <i>Amin</i>	3. Two clerks-one Persian writer and the other Hindi writer

p. 130.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4. <i>Munsif-i-Khazana</i> | 4. <i>Fautadar</i> (treasurer) |
| 5. Two clerks-one Persian writer and the other Hindi writer | 5. Two clerks-one Persian writer and the other Hindi writer. |
- f. 50b.

6. *Qanungo*.
ff. 113-114a.

Nature of *Iqta* System

The history of the *iqta* system can be traced back to the

establishment of the Delhi Sultanate : the sultans assigned *iqtas* to their nobles for their maintenance in stead of cash salaries.¹ These nobles were called *muqtas*. Their accounts were settled at the department of the *vizarat*.² By the time of the Lodis the *muqtas* seem to have been officially called *wajahdars*.³ But the land assignments were still called *iqtas*.⁴ The terms *muqta*, *hakim* and *amir* were also used by people for the assignees.⁵ Mushtaqi also calls them *muqta* and *hakim* both.

The *iqtas* were assigned to the nobles excluding the land-grants given to the scholars, sayids and pious persons by the Sultan for their maintenance. The *iqtas* differed in size. It might be a *pargana*, less than a *pargana*, *sarkar* or the whole province. The *wajahdar*, *muqta* or *hakim* had no right over the land-grants.

1. Vide Minhaj, pp. 172, 180, 182, etc. Vide Barani, pp. 40, 61-63, etc.

2. Afif, p. 414.

3. Shaikh Rukn al-Din refers to Malik Usman Karrani, who was the *wajahdar* of the *pargana* of Gangoh where he wanted to keep with him one of the sons of his religious preceptor, Shaikh Abd al-Quddus. The writer says :

ملک عثمان کرآنی وجهدار پرگنہ گنگوہ مرید متخلص بود۔
آرزوئے داشتہم اگر یک شیخ زاده قدم مبارک خود بر سر ما نهاد و در
مقام ما متوطن شود موجب سعادت و سرفرازی ما گردد۔ بدین
جهت چند مرتبه بکوشش عرض نمود۔ حضرت قطبی فقیر حقیر
دکن الدین را فرستادند۔

At another place in the same works Dattu Sarwani, the disciple of Shaikh Abdul Quddus refers to the *parganas* of Kant and Tilhar, assigned to Isa Khan by Sher Shah as *wajahdari parganas*. *Lataif-i-Quddusi*, pp. 62, 83. Since Dattu Sarwani and Shaikh Ruknuddin lived in close contact with *masnad-i-ali* Isa Khan, we can presume that both the Lodi and the Sur kings assigned the maintenance *iqtas* to their nobles as *wajhdars* and not as *iqtadars*.

4. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 65-66a.

5. Shaikh Abd-al-Quddus refers to Qazi Razi as the *muqta* of Awadh and also the *amir-i-khitta-i-Awadh* at different pages. He also says that Qazi Razi was one of the leading nobles. Vide *Anwar al'uyun*, pp. 16, 21 and 51. *Lataif-i-Quddusi*, p. 5 ; *Maktubat-i-Quddusi*, p. 20.

Sultan Sikandar specifically mentioned in the *farmans* that the *imlak* and *wazaif* were excluded from the *iqta*¹. If any noble was reported to have disobeyed the royal *farman* by oppressing any one who held *wajah-i-ma'ash*, he was severely punished. Once Malih Turk, the *wajahdar* of Arwal (in Gaya district) deprived a Sayyid of his *milk*. The Sayyid came to the Sultan to file his complaint against the oppression he had suffered at the hands of Malih Turk. Since the *wajahdar* was found guilty after an inquiry was made into the matter, the Sultan dismissed him

1. Vide *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 34b, 65a-66a etc.

All the later historians wrongly call the assignees as *jagirdar* instead of *wajahdar* or *muqta*. There is no reference to jagir in any book written before Akbar's accession. The *Tarikh-i-Daulat-i-Sher Shahi*, a so-called contemporary work of the Sur period, frequently refers to *jagir* in the sense of *iqta* even for the Lodi period. But the language and the contents of this book show that it was fabricated during Shah Jahan's reign. Therefore, it was possible for Sujan Rai to use it in his famous book, *Khulasat al-Tawarikh*. The *Tarikh-i-Daulat-i-Sher Shahi* of Hasan Ali is an untrustworthy work because many of its accounts are not corroborated by reliable evidence. For instance, Muhammad Khan Sur of Chaund has been called the *hakim* of Jaunpur while Abbas Khan says that he held the *pargana* of Chaund with a rank of 1,500 *sawars*. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, pp. 25-26.

Moreover, Mushtaqi says that no Sur was given the rank of an *amir* during the Lodi period. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 47b.

Similarly, the author of the *Tarikh-i-Daulat-i-Sher Shahi* says that Sher Shah married the widow of Bahadur Khan Nuhani and thus occupied Bihar. This is absolutely incorrect.

As far as the terms used by the author are concerned, they were not in vogue during the Afghan period. For example, the term *suba* (صوبہ), an equivalent to the province, was not adopted till the early years of Akbar's reign. The author says about Sultan Mahmud Lodi, son of Sikandar Lodi :

بر صوبہ بہار قابض و متصرف شد ہمہ اقطاع و مزارع
سر زمین بر امرائے دولت و اعیان سلطنت بخشش فرمود۔

Vide *Daulat-i-Sher Shahi*, pp. 12 & 15, *Medieval India Quarterly* Aligarh, Vol. I, No. 1, July, 1950.

In short, the book is a sheer fabrication of Shah Jahan's reign.

from the state service¹. Similarly, no noble could occupy any land which was not specifically mentioned in the *farman* of assignment. Once a noble complained to Sikandar against Miran Sayid Fazlallah that he was assigned the *iqta* of a hundred thousand *tankas* while he had occupied the *iqtas* which yielded five hundred thousand *tankas*.² He also said that if the *iqta* would be transferred to him, he would keep only a hundred thousand *tankas* with him, pay three hundred thousands to the royal exchequer and the remaining hundred thousand to Miran Fazlallah. Thereupon, an inquiry was instituted into the matter by the order of the Sultan. The land was measured and the *amin* and *muqaddams* attended the court with their findings that the *iqta* yielded 15 hundred thousand *tankas* instead of five and it was assigned to Miran by the Sultan himself.³ This is indicative of the fact that (the *iqtas* were not granted to the nobles either on the basis of heredity or the conception of kingdom being tribal property. The assignees could be transferred from their *iqtas* if it was thought necessary.) 5

The assignees had great rights over the revenue of their *iqtas*. Sometimes they had to pay an annaul amount of the surplus revenue to the centre. This was fixed in the light of the previous records of the *parganas* and the villages. Their accounts were checked at the *diwan-i-ala*.⁴ If all these formalities were fulfilled properly, the assignee was allowed to administer his *iqta* as he desired. He kept the turbulent element in awe for the maintenance of peace and order.⁵ If the *iqtas* yielded larger amount of revenue than it was speculated by the *diwan*, the assignees were allowed by Sultan Sikandar to keep it with them due to his generous nature.⁶ As the

1. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 11b.

2. *Ibid.*, f. 13b.

3. *Ibid.*, ff. 26b, 27a.

4. *Ibid.*, f. 9a; *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 38.

5. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, pp. 13-14, for Farid Khan's (later Sher Shah) measures adopted against the recalcitrant *zamindars*.

6. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 26b-27a.

master of the revenue of their *iqtas*, they could assign certain lands to pious persons like the Sultan.¹

The *muqta* or *wajahadar* was responsible for the administration as well as the maintenance of peace and order in his *iqta*. He took keen interest in the progress of agriculture in his *iqta*. The peasants were encouraged to bring new land under cultivation and also got loans from him whenever necessary.² If he was posted somewhere outside his *iqta*, his representative administered it. He exercised full military and executive powers inside the *iqta* quite independent of the *hakim* of the *sakar* or the province. For example, Sultan Bahlul appointed *Masnad-i-ali* Umar Khan Sarwani as the *hakim* of the Lahore *sakar* while he was given *iqta* in the *sakar* of Sirhind.³ After Umar Khan's death, his sons Khan-i-Azam Said Khan and Haibat Khan also remained in Lahore and Shahabad till their exile during Sikandar's reign.⁴ Similarly, when Sultan Ibrahim turned hostile to his father's nobles he also favoured the nobles who were exiled by his father. Therefore, Isa Khan Sarwani, son of Haibat Khan Sarwani, who had returned from Malwa, was granted the title of *Masnad-i-ali*. He was posted in the Delhi fort while his *iqta*, Thanesar, was administered by his son, Kamal Khan.⁵

The traditional *iqta* system continued unchanged under the Sur also. They did not usher any change in it. They also assigned their nobles the revenue of *parganas* and *sarkars* according to their rank and position in lieu of cash salary; these *parganas* and *sarkars* were called the *wajahdari iqta*. The Sur kings also assigned *iqtas* to their nobles excluding the tax-free

1. *Anwar al'uyun*, p. 19.

2. *Waqlat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 32a.

3. Vide *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, p. 6; *Lataif-i Quddusi*, pp. 30-31.

4. See *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, for Said Khan's posting in Lahore and exile; *Lataif-i-Quddusi*, p. 41, for the exile of Said Khan and Haibat Khan. Said Khan, the eldest son, was given the title of *Masnad-i-ali*. See *Maktubat-i-Quddusi*.

5. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, pp. 88-89 for Isa Khan's appointment in the Delhi fort; *Lataif-i-Quddusi*, p. 72 for the *pargana* of Thanesar.

(S.S. ordered nobles
to inquire into complaints of
deprivation of grants)
1751

land-grants (*wajah-i ma'ash* lands) given to the scholars, *saiyias* and pious persons for their maintenance. The evidence available in this connexion shows that the *amils* in the *Khalsa parganas* had deprived persons of their land-grants during Sultan Ibrahim's reign, and Sher Shah had ordered his nobles to inquire into their complaints and restored previous land-grants to their legitimate claimants in their maintenance *iqtas*.¹

The *wajahdar*, whether an assignee of a *pargana*, less or more than a *pargana*, or the entire *sarkar*, was held responsible for its government and defence. If he had to serve the state outside his *iqta*, he had to leave there one of his men with a sufficient force to carry on its administration on his behalf. As Khawwas Khan was appointed the *muqta* of the *sarkars* of Jodhpur and Nagore, Ajmer and Mewat, he had to leave his trusted slave, Bhagwant in his *iqta*, the entire *sarkar* of Sirhind with a good number of soldiers.² Unlike *Masnad-i-ali* Khawwas Khan, *Masnad-i-ali* Shuja'at Khan was assigned the maintenance *iqta* in Malwa where he was posted to serve. His *iqta* comprised the *sarkars* of Ujjain, Sarangpur and Mandpur for the maintenance of 12,000 *sawars*. The *wajahdars*, or *muqtas* kept the entire revenue of their *iqtas* with them while that of the territories under their charge for administration was sent to the royal exchequer.

Though Islam Shah is reported to have abolished the *iqta* system and established the system of cash payment instead by bringing the whole empire under *Khalsa*, a careful study shows that it continued even during his reign. It is true that he increased the *Khalsa* territories, paid a large number of

1. *Lataif-i-Quddusi*, p. 83 Shaikh Dattu Sarwani says that when Isa Khan Sarwani was appointed as the *munsif* of the *khitta* of Smabhal, he got two *parganas* of Kant and Tilhar as *wajhdar*. He (*Masnad-i-ali*) asked him to go there to supervise administration. At first he did not like to go there but soon afterwards changed his mind and left for those *parganas*. He was informed that some widows were deprived of their sustenance land-grants by the *amils*, therefore, he would like to do justice to the needy people as it was a virtuous thing.

nobles in cash, but the high nobles still held maintenance *iqtas*.
 In 1547 he is reported to have assigned Sarangpur and a few other *parganas* to Shuja'at Khan while the entire vilayet of Malwa was divided among other trusted nobles.¹ There seems to have been a large number of the nobles who were posted in different *sarkars* with *iqtas*.² Shah Muhammad Farmuli, the son of Mian Maruf Farmuli, still held the *sarkar* of Qanauj as his maintenance *iqta*. Similarly, the sons of Sher Khan Lodi still continued in their *iqtas* as will be discussed subsequently.

Transfer of the Iqtas :

Both the Lodis and the Sur kings exercised their royal prerogative and authority by transferring or dismissing the nobles from their *iqtas* whenever they liked. No noble had the courage to resent this change even if their *iqta* was resumed to be given to some outsider. Sultan Bahlul is reported to have promised Sultan Mahmud Khalji of Malwa to give him the *sarkar* of Biryana in return of the military help the latter would send against the Sharqi Sultan of Jaunpur. But the exchange could not take place due to the sudden death of Sultan Mahmud Khalji.⁴

The successors of Sultan Bahlul, Sikandar and Ibrahim, were very particular of asserting their sovereign power and authority. They emphatically established the fact that the king was the master of the land and the *iqtas* could be assigned or resumed at the royal pleasure. Sultan Sikandar replaced all the undesirable nobles by his favourites just after his accession.

1. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 98.

2. Ni'matullah says that Islam Shah allowed Shuja'at Khan to retain the whole of the vilayet of Malwa in his charge while 'Adil Shah assigned him only the *sarkar* of Sarangpur and a few *parganas* in some other *sarkar*. But according to Abul Fazl, Islam Shah left only a few *parganas* with Shuja'at Khan and divided the entire vilayet among others. Later on, Sultan Adil Shah restored the charge of Malwa to Shuja'at Khan. As a matter of fact, Nimatullah has confused Islam Shah with Adil Shah. *Akbarnama*, II/90.

3. Proceedings of the *Idara-i-Ma'arif-i-Islamia*, op. cit., p. 85.

4. Abd al-Haqq, *Tarikh-i-Haqqi* Aligarh Ms. ff. 45b-46a,

In 1509, he transferred some of the important *iqtas* from the old nobles to others for political reasons.¹ Besides, he assigned the large *iqta*, rank and the office of Khan-i-Jahan Lodi after his death to his servant, Mian Zain al-Din in preference to his son, Ahmad Khan Lodi. Ahmad Khan Lodi was given only a few villages in the *pargana* of Kaithal (Karnal) in the name of his mother. As Sultan Ibrahim had great confidence in Ahmad Khan Lodi, he replaced Mian Zain al-Din with the former in his father's *iqta* and office as the *muqta* of the *sarkar* of Badaun.² He also recognized Samru as the son of *Masnad-i-ali* Mian Muhammad Farmuli while the relatives of the departed were doubtful about his parentage (after the death of Mian Muhammad). Samru was born of a slave girl whom the Mian had given to one of his servants. Mian Muhammad took her back when he was informed of her pregnancy after a few months. However, Sultan Ibrahim assigned Samru also an *iqta* in the *sarkar* of Awadh.³

It is also noteworthy that the *muqtas* of the Afghan period were not subject to frequent transfers like the Mughal nobles under Akbar and his successors. The *muqtas* or *wajahdars* were not transferred from their *iqtas* unless they lost the royal confidence.⁴ There were certain nobles whose descendants retained their ancestral *iqtas* if they proved themselves worthy of the rank and office.⁵ If the Sultan considered the sons of any deceased noble unworthy of his office and rank, he could set aside their claim. The sons could succeed their fathers in their office and rank as a favour from the Sultan but the principle of hereditary succession was not always adhered to.

Similarly Sher Shah and his successors appear to have transferred and dismissed their nobles from the *iqtas* whenever it was necessary. No noble had the courage to defy their

1. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I/332.

2. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 29b.

3. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 53-54a.

4. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 26b.

5. See *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 53; vide *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 22b-33a, 65b-66a.

orders in this regard even if his *iqta* was transferred to a new-comer as discussed previously. Sher Shah assigned the entire *sarkar* of Lucknow to Mallu Khan in lieu of Malwa and the vilayet of Shamsabad to Bhaiya Puran Mal, the independent Rajput ruler of Raisin and Ujjain *sarkars*. But the assignees could not take over the charge of their extensive *iqtas* because the former considered himself unfit to serve as hard taskmaster like Sher Shah and, therefore, fled away from his camp.¹ Bhaiya Puran Mal was destroyed in spite of Sher Shah's promise about his security because he was considered to be undependable.²

With the accession of Islam Shah to the throne, the transfers of the *iqtas* of the old nobles took place on a large scale on account of his hostility towards them. His own favourites

1. Prof. Qanungo wrongly identifies Lucknow with Lakhnauti in Bengal. He says, "So after his arrival at Ujjain, Sher issued a *farman* in the name of Qadir Shah that it was his pleasure to bestow on him the kingdom of Lakhnauti in exchange of the kingdom of Malwa." Cf. *Sher Shah and His Times*, 334. Mushtaqi specifically says :.

"He (Mallu Khan) was ordered to send his family and dependants to Lucknow which was assigned as an *iqta* to him while he himself would remain with the king." *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 35b.

'Abbas Khan Sarwani also supports Mushtaqi's statement. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 95a.

Sher Shah was wise enough not to assign the extensive region of Lakhnauti to Mallu Khan, a man of doubtful loyalty, as it was a distant place, full of the anti-Afghan elements. In Bengal, Mallu Khan could be more mischievous than in Malwa.

2. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 55a ; *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 100a.

'Abbas Khan says that Sher Shah promised to assign the *iqta* of Benaras to Puran Mal in lieu of his territories. But it does not seem probable because most of the area of the *sarkar* of Benaras was held by the hereditary Hindu *zamindars* who were under the *muqta* of the vilayet of Kara since the Lodi period. The state revenue realized from this territory was not sufficient to meet the expenses of Puran Mal and his followers. Contrary to it, the vilayet of Shamsabad was an extensive unit which was quite acceptable to Puran Mal as Mushtaqi says.

also experienced dismissal as well as transfer either for political needs or by way of punishment. As a result, the nobles remained in perpetual fear of their dismissal or transfer of the *iqtas* and warned their fellow nobles in the distant territories if they were reported to them acting in a wrong way, lest it should be reported to the king and might result in their destruction.¹

Since anarchy and chaos prevailed during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Adil Shah, the royal authority was flouted and every thing was thrown into confusion. But the king exercised his right of transferring *iqtas* from the undesirable nobles whenever he could do it in spite of widespread chaotic conditions. He transferred the *sarkar* of Qanunj, the maintenance-*iqta* of Shah Muhammad Farmuli, to Sarmast Khan Sirbini, although the former was one of the premier nobles of Islam Shah. Sikandar Khan, son of Shah Muhammad Farmuli, got infuriated over this transfer and began to kill the Afghans around him, and also chased the king who fled away to his *harem*, but after some conflict Ibrahim Khan Sur (later Sultan Ibrahim Shah) succeeded in killing both the father and son.² Likewise, Mahmud Khan Lodi, Kamal Khan Lodi, Umar Khan Lodi, and Qasim Khan Lodi, sons of Sher Khan Lodi, who held the *parganas* of Kampil, Patiali, Saket and Bhogaon as their maintenance-*iqtas* since the reign of Sher Shah, were dismissed by him on account of their disobedience. These *parganas* were assigned to other nobles.³

Administration of Khalsa Lands

The *Khalsa* territories began to shrink during the weak rule of the successors of Firuz Shah, and they nearly ceased to exist during the reign of the last Saiyid ruler. Sultan Bahlul shaped a new policy of his own regarding the *Khalsa* lands, after he

1. Cf. *The Proceedings of the Idara-i-Maarif-i-Islamia*, pp. 85-6.

2. *Zubdat-al-Tawarikh*, ff. 125a-b.

3. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahani*, II/457-9.

Later on Mahmud Khan, Qasim Khan and Kamal Khan were pardoned and went with Hemu to fight against the Mughals in Delhi in 1555. Mahmud Khan was killed in the second battle of Panipat while Umar Khan and Kamal Khan had fled to Gujrat.

had occupied Delhi. He did not reserve any extensive territory for the *Khalsa*, but set aside certain *parganas* in every *sarkar*. In 1452-3 A.D. the Sultan took away seven *parganas* from Ahmad Khan Mewati and seven from Dariya Khan Lodi, the *muqta* of the *khitta-i-Sambhal* (later *sarkar*) when they paid their allegiance to him.¹ Similarly the *parganas* were reserved in the western *sarkars* (Punjab).² The same policy seems to have been followed by his successors.

Masnad-i-ali Khan-i-Jahan Lodi (former Mian Husain), the *muqta* of the *sarkar* of Badaun, had to make arrangements to send the revenue collected in the *Khalsa parganas* in his *sarkar*, to the royal exchequer.³ A few references are also found to the *parganas* of *Khalsa* during Sultan Ibrahim's reign. According to his *farman*, the *pargana* of Sandila was in the *Khalsa* while it was a dependency of the *sarkar* of Lucknow which was held by Mubarak Khan Yusuf Khail and his sons after his death till the early years of his reign. Abbas Khan Sarwani also supplements our information when he refers to the *Khalsa parganas* reserved in the extensive vilayet of Jaunpur. Some of these *parganas* were occupied by Sher Shah Sur after the overthrow of the Lodi dynasty.⁴ Similarly, some of the important cities, like the headquarters of the *sarkars*, were reserved for the *Khalsa*. For instance, the cities of Hisar Firuza and Kol, which had fruit-gardens and large areas of agricultural land around them and were the centre of trade, were placed under the charge of the *shiqdars*. The *parganas* attached to them were assigned to the nobles. These stray references are indicative of the fact that the Lodi Sultans never reserved any territory for the *Khalsa*. Secondly, the *Khalsa parganas* were scattered in all the *sarkars* and administered by the *diwan-i ala* as it was done previously.

← The Surs also followed the same system of reserving certain

1. *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 310

2. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 9b; *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 30.

3. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 29a.

4. *Tarikh-i-Sher Sahhi*, f. 30a.

↑ Commanding of 13000 p.g. Sarkar
parganas in the sarkars and vilayets for the Khalsa under the direct control of the diwan-i-ala. Mushtaqi says that Sher Shah had one hundred and thirty thousand parganas where he appointed a shiqdar in every one of them for carrying on administration.¹

It was possible for Sher Shah to earmark a large number of the parganas for Khalsa because his empire was vast enough. A large sarkar usually comprised 50 parganas while the smallest one had only a few parganas during the Lodi period. Therefore, a few parganas could be reserved for the Khalsa in every sarkar and the vilayets of Multan, Bengal and Malwa. [Abbas Khan says that Sher Shah ordered Shuja'at Khan at the time of his appointment in the vilayet of Malwa to reserve a number of parganas for a certain amount of revenue for the royal Khalsa.] The officers of Shuja'at Khan, thereupon, persuaded their master to take away the land of the royal Khasa Khail sawars, who were posted in a large number to serve in Malwa, and reserve it as Khalsa land. But the Khasa Khail sawars, resented the decision of Shuja'at Khan, and decided to send their complaint to the king, with the result that the muqta of Malwa had to restore their land to them.²

Islam Shah seems to have changed his father's policy in this matter by bringing the sarkars of Delhi and Western U.P. under Khalsa as the appointment of the nobles in these units shows. Taj Khan Karrani was posted in Sambhal with 20,000 sawars to guard its frontiers against the attacks of Khawwas Khan while Yahya Taran resided in Biyana with only 5,000 sawars. The revenue of the Biyana sarkar was greater than that of Sambhal sarkar, but the latter could not be successfully guarded with a small army for Khawwas Khan's presence in the Kumaon hills. Therefore, Taj Khan Karrani must have been paid by the royal exchequer. The sarkar of Sambhal yielded, 13,844,300 tankas and the sarkar of Biyana 14,414,980 tankas during Sultan Ibrahim's reign.

1. *Waqiat-i-Mushtraqi*, f. 50b.

2. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 112a.

On the death of Islam Shah, the whole administrative machinery was paralysed by the rebellions of the powerful nobles. In an attempt to win the support of certain nobles, Adil Shah distributed large *iqtas* among the nobles on a large scale after his accession, and thus the policy of Islam Shah in this regard was abandoned. But the old *Khalsa parganas* of Sher Shah's times in different territories seem to have been retained by him.)

(Here, it may be pointed out that the system of reserving a few *parganas* in different *sarkars* and vilayet was adopted by Sultan Bahlul for the lack of territories and need of satisfying the Afghan as well as non-Afghan nobles by assigning them agreeable *iqtas*. Though Sultan Sikandar increased the number of the *Khalsa parganas*, the entire *sarkars* were not earmarked as *Khalsa* territories till Islam Shah's accession.) But Adil Shah abandoned Islam Shah's policy and took to the old system. In fact, Islam Shah's policy was wise as it strengthened the position and the resources of the central authority. Contrary to it, the separate *Khalsa parganas* in different *sarkars* and territories were assigned by the rebel nobles at the time of anarchy. The rebels could deprive the royal *shiqdars* of the treasures and other property placed in their charge because they were never powerful enough to face the rebel nobles, who generally held higher military ranks and *iqtas* than them.

The Administration of Revenue.

There were three systems of revenue assessment, crop-sharing, measurement (*zabt* system) and compounding (indigenous *kankut*) prevalent in Northern India. The first two were common while the third system also seems to have continued into practice. But Sultan Sikandar was very particular of the system of measurement for its merits. To facilitate this system he introduced his famous *gaz-i-Sikandari* (yard) of 32 digits, which was used at the time of every harvest.¹ The *patwaris* were charged with the duty of maintaining the registers of measured land under cultivation, and the work of

1. *Waqlat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 26; *Ain-i-Akbari*, Jarret and sarkar, Vol. II, p. 66.

measurement was done under the supervision of *amin* or *amil*.¹ This system must have been strictly enforced in the *Khalsa* territories which were directly under the control of the Revenue Ministry while the *muqtas* and *wajahdars* were free to adopt any system thought more convenient. Similarly, the *ijaradar* could also adopt any of the prevalent systems.²

Since the main source of income to the state exchequer was agriculture, the Sultan discouraged all the nobles from leaving even a small portion of land uncultivated. The forests were felled down around the villages and towns to bring their land under cultivation, with the result that the villages flourished and the land turned into rich granaries.³ The peasants were encouraged to bring virgin land under plough, they even got loan from the state *wajahdars* whenever they stood in need of financial help.⁴ To do away with the high prices of grains and also to save the producers as well as merchants from the burden of the state taxation, *zakat* tax (sales and transit tax) on the grain was abolished. These measures not only enhanced the state revenue but also rendered the land assignees in a position to amass wealth which they spent lavishly in their own life time and bequeathed to their sons or successors on their death.⁵ Moreover, they brought prosperity for the benefit of everyone. Therefore, when Mushtaqi closes his account of Sultan Sikandar Lodi's reign, he bursts out in his praise and copies the verses of Amir Khusrau to show the happy conditions prevailing.⁶

But the *muqtas* or *wajahdars* of the *parganas* or *iqtas* were not bound by the royal orders to follow any uniform system.

1. *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 26b-27a.

2. *Ibid.*, f. 26b. Any *parganas* or *iqta* could be given to some other person in case a certain amount of revenue to the state was promised.

3. *Ibid.*, f. 8b.

4. *Ibid.*, f. 27a.

5. *Ibid.*, f. 8a.

6. *Ibid.*, f. 17b.

with regard to the administration of land revenue. The relevant evidence contained in the *Waqlat-i-Mushtaqi* and the *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi* shows that the nobles or *muqtas* were free to administer their *iqtas* in the way they thought proper. If the *muqaddam* or *zamindar* refused to pay land revenue in peace and the peasants followed him in disobedience, the *muqta* could reduce them to obedience by the use of military force. Ahmad Khan Jilwani, the *muqta* of the *sarkar* of Biyana under Bahlul and Sikandar, is reported to have used force against the rebel *muqaddams* and peasants in the villages under his jurisdiction.¹ Similarly, Farid Sur (later Sher Shah) destroyed many rebel *muqaddams* and their followers (peasants) in the *parganas* of Sahsram and Khwaspur Tanda assigned to his father by Khan-i Azam Jamal Khan Sarang Khani on behalf of Sultan Sikandar. Having subjugated them, he offered them that they should either accept the method of measurement or crop-sharing. Some of them accepted the method of measurement while others preferred the sharing of crops at every harvest.²

The group or detailed assessment of revenue of a *pargana* was made on the basis of village by the help of the *amil* and the *qanungo*. Thus the assessed revenue of different villages in a *pargana* was taken together as the total revenue due from it.

The *qanungo*, who was found in every *pargana*, maintained the revenue papers of the previous year on the basis of which was ascertained the present, past and future state of the *pargana*.³ If the *pargana* was in the *Khalsa*, the *muqaddam* of the village was required to pay the assessed amount either in cash or kind. As there was acute shortage of gold and silver during the reign

1. *Waqlat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 68a.

2. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 12a. Farid is also reported to have given option to the peasants for the payment of land revenue either in cash or kind as they thought convenient. Commission was fixed for the persons employed to measure the land so that they might not oppress the peasants or their representative by charging it in excess.

3. See Moreland, p. 73. Also *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 26b-27a.

of Sultan Ibrahim; he ordered his officers to collect revenue in kind.¹ Though this change facilitated the work of the peasants and *muqaddams* with regard to the payment of state dues, it brought down the prices of foodgrains. The nobles and officers were spendthrift people, and sold their share just after its collection without having any regard for prices. Describing the prosperity of the reign of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, Abdullah says that one of the wonders of his times was that the essential commodities became so cheap that it never happened previously; Sultan 'Ala u'ddin Khalji's reign was an exception because it was brought by force. Although there was abundance and cheapness during the reign of Sultan Sikandar Lodi also, yet it could not be compared with that of his successor's reign. "It is said that one Bahloli (later Rupee) could fetch ten maunds of foodgrains, five seers oil and ten yards cloth. The other commodities were also cheap like that. The reason for this was that it rained in times and agriculture made tremendous progress."²

The state share in the agricultural produce was one-third and it was collected by the *muqaddam*. Having deducted his commission, he paid it to the state officers.³

The aforesaid system witnessed important changes under Sher Shah. Apart from the appointment of a few new officials for the smooth working of revenue administration on the *pargana* as well as *sarkar* level, (Sher Shah is reported to have introduced certain reforms in the administration of revenue which deprived the nobles of having free hand in their *iqtas* and also did away with all the possibilities of oppression of the peasantry, because the prosperity of the empire depended on

1. *Tarikh-i-Haqiqi*, f. 49a; Also *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 105.
2. *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 104.

3. Moreland, p. 76. 'Abbas Khan says that one share of the produce was left to the peasant and half a share was taken by the *muqaddam* as state due during the reign of Sher Shah. As Sher Shah is reported neither to have reduced nor increased the state demand of revenue of the Lodis, we can presume that it had continued since the Lodi period.

the progress of agriculture.^(a) Similarly, the turbulent *samindars*, who used to take to highway robbery and never paid state dues of revenue in peace, were forced into submission. Consequently prosperity was brought to all and sundry within a short time. It is also to the credit of the royal nobles that they achieved success in enforcing the royal reforms and regulations without any hesitation. Let us study Sher Shah's measures with regard to his revenue policy and the role of the nobility played in this regard in some detail. *Meets*

Assessment (The first change introduced by Sher Shah in the revenue system, which affected the autonomy of the nobles posted in different territories, was that they were denied a free hand in adopting any method of assessment of their choice as they did previously.) The methods of crop-sharing and farming for the assessment of state share of revenue were abolished and that of measurement was not only retained but almost carried on every where.¹ This change was caused by Sher Shah's sympathy with the peasantry which he always considered as the real backbone of the empire's power and glory. Nobody, whether a noble or a petty servant, could have the courage to do harm to the peasants or their cultivation. The nobles looked after the green fields around their camps when on military expedition, lest some one should cut it away for the animals and they might be put to shame in consequence.² Once Sher Shah saw a camel-driver with a plant of gram chewing its green grains. The king at once turned his horse towards him and ordered him to be brought before him. As he was brought to the royal presence, the king asked him why he had disobeyed the royal order by pulling out the plant. The camel driver replied : "Your Majesty, I have not pulled it out with my own hands but I have got it from somebody else." The culprit, who was also a camel-driver, was punished in an exemplary manner and nobody was found guilty of that crime since then.³

1. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, f. 113a.

2. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 52a ; *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 142.

3. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, f. 52a ; *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 142.

Prior to Sher Shah's advent to sovereignty, the nobles appear to have preferred the method of crop-sharing as it brought them the benefit of a better crop and increase in the produce which was always possible by the efforts of the peasants. On the contrary, measurement of the cultivated land would provide them only with the revenue fixed by the state for every *bigha*. The peasants also had to pay extra charges as remuneration technically known as *jaribana* and *muhassilana* to those who carried on the work of measurement. (Sher Shah) ^{imp} abolished all the extra charges and ordered that the cultivated land would be measured every year for the revenue assessment and nobody would charge anything extra from the peasants except the fixed amount. ⁽²⁾ This system of assessment obtained throughout the Sur Empire except the territory of Multan ^{2 Rappul} which was laid waste by the Biloch chiefs after the fall of the Langahs. Fath Jang, the *muqta* of the territories of Dipalpur and Multan, was ordered to follow the traditions of Langahs with regard to the revenue administration and repeople the area as much as possible. The *muqta* acted accordingly. He realized one-fourth of the land-produce by the division of crop as it was the custom in Multan. ^{Rev dd}

As regards the state revenue demand in other territories, the modern scholars differ from each other on this matter. Dr. Qanungo and Dr. I.H. Qureshi hold that Sher Shah took one-fourth of the agricultural produce. ³ But Moreland differs from them and states that the state share was one-third during the Sur period. ^{Imp} Mr. Moreland's argument as developed in his article is based on a correct analysis of the data available in different medieval works. ¹² Let us discuss the question afresh

1. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, ff. 113-4a.

2. *Ibid.*, f. 99-100a.

3. *Sher Shah*, pp. 373-4.

Dr. I.H. Qureshi, *Village Economy in the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent in the Middle Ages*, Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society, Vol. I, Part V, January, 1953, p. 38.

4. W.H. Moreland, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1926, p. 448.

in some details.) Abul Fazl tells us that Sher Shah framed three crop rates fixing one-third of the produce as state share.¹ These rates were applied to the land separately according to the fertility of its soil. It is to Sher Shah's credit that he introduced a *rai* or schedule of the crop-rates in India for the first time. As the soil differed in fertility from place to place, the 'good', 'midding' and 'bad', produce of the previous years was taken together per *bigha* and one-third of this was fixed as the state revenue demand. This *rai* facilitated the work of the revenue collectors as well as of the peasants because they could be easily converted into cash rates according to the bazar prices. The rates for the perishable green vegetables seem to have been fixed in cash as they are not recorded in the *rai*.² Abul Fazl states: "the revenue levied by Sher Khan (Shah), which at the present day is represented in all provinces as the lowest rate of assessment, generally obtained, and for the convenience of the cultivators and the soldiery, the value was taken in ready money."³ He also provides us with a schedule of rates per *bigha* for the crops of *rabi* and *khari* harvest which are the transcription of Sher Shah's *rai*. They make it crystal clear that the state took one-third of the

Interpretation of
Standard yield of grain (yadd/Bigha) calculated
as average of High/Middle/Low yield of a crop of
prev. yrs. & converted into Cash Rates acc to
MKT prices
esp. of perishable vegetables.
Cash rates

1. *Ain-i-Akbari*, i/397-300.
2. Cf. Moreland, pp. 75-76.
3. *Ain-i-Akbari*, Jarret, ii/68.

2 Curtailing of Dissent / Rebellion

Maintenance of Law & order 166 in the domains

↓ a) The nobles of Sher Shah also deserve credit for working out the system successfully according to the wishes of their masters. a) Hamid Khan Kakar held firm control over the hilly territories of Nagarkot, Jawalamukhi, Didawal and Jammu where he enforced measurement and everybody paid revenue with submission. b) Masnad-i-ali Isa Khan Sarwani successfully reduced the turbulent zamindars in the sarkar of Sambhal to such a position that they could not breathe in opposition to him any more. They cut down their dense forests which they had planted for hiding themselves against the royal forces, which were deputed against them for their robbery, rebellion, etc. They also paid state dues according to measurement. c) Similarly, Parak Niazi, the shiqdar of Qanauj, cut down forests and reduced the rebellious zamindars to complete obedience, with the result that they paid revenue to the state without any delay.¹ As a result of the clearance of dense forests in different sarkars in conformity with the royal policy, the agricultural land increased and India began to turn into a vast green expanse as Khan-i-Azam (Aziz Koka) wrote to Jahangir : "Sher Shah Afghan, who was not an angel but administrator, established such a stable government that his memory is still alive. He turned Hindustan into a garden and the kings of Iran and Turan developed a desire to see it. Hazrat Arsh Ashyani (Akbar) continued his regulations for fifty years without changing them."²

X A few words may also be added here about the development of certain regions by Sher Shah. Mushtaqi and Abbas glow with pride upon Sher Shah's sympathetic attitude towards the peasants as well as his interest in agricultural progress in his Empire. But their information is confined only to some parts in North India. Shaikh Kabir furnishes interesting information about the progress of agriculture in Malwa as a result of its conquest by Sher Shah. Sher Shah took keen interest in

1. *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, ff. 114-5a.

2. *Jalal Hisari, Maktubat-i-Khan-i-Jahan wa Gwaliarnama*, Rotograph of the B.M. Ms. No. 16,859, 18a.

rehabilitating people in the valley of Narbada. The author says that most of the region on the banks of the Narbada (later *sakar* of Handiya and Satwas) lay desolate since long. Sher Shah peopled this region by giving the cultivators rent-free lands for three years. Consequently the valley flourished in prosperity and population after a short time. By the time of Islam Shah, it was so developed that it was assigned to a high noble for maintaining 6,000 *sawars*.¹ Similarly, Sher Shah repopulated the territory of Saronj which was also found desolate. The peasants were invited from different parts and encouraged to settle down there.²

X Now we can say that the picture which emerges on going through the medieval works is that of peace and prosperity prevailing in northern India during the Afghan period. That the state system worked well under the Afghan kings is undisputed. A fair standard of living was achieved even by the lower section of people. The shepherds and petty gardeners seem to have led a life of contentment,³ for the state was sympathetic to the poor. Steps were taken in a peaceful way from time to time to bring down the prices of the necessities of life. During the reigns of Sultan Sikandar and Ibrahim cotton cloth and other commodities were being sold at cheaper rates than in any other reign excepting the last years of Ala 'al-Din Khalji's rule, when a great deal of force was used to achieve the end.

Sher Shah's policy of providing the peasants with security and facilities by improving and constructing roads to interlink various parts of the empire gave a new trend to the economic

1. *Afsana-i-Shahan*, ff. 126b-27b.

Abul Fazl also makes a similar statement about Khandesh that extensive resettlement began there under the patronage of the founder of the Khandesh dynasty towards the close of the 14th century. *Ain-i-Akbari*, i/475.

2. *Afsana-i-Shahan*, f. 131b.

3. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ff. 21a-96b.

set-up of North India.) This policy was continued by Islam Shah also. But the chaotic conditions during the reign of Sultan Adil Shah Sur paralysed the state system. A terrible famine occurred which had ravaged the territories of Agra, Biyana and Delhi. As it lasted for two years, people died in such large numbers that neither coffins nor graves could be provided to them. First, poor people began to eat Egyptian thorns, wild dry-grass and cow-hides. Later on they took to cannibalism. As a result, most of the country was rendered desolate. The peasants either died or had turned dacoits.¹

1. *Badauni*, I/428-9 ; *Akbarnama*, II/35.

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